

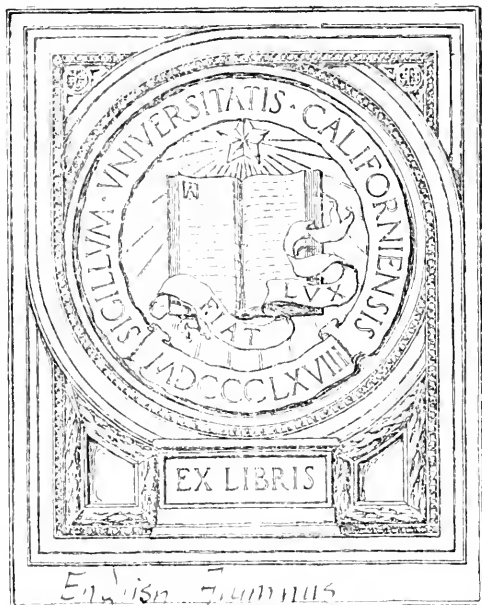
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English Flammus

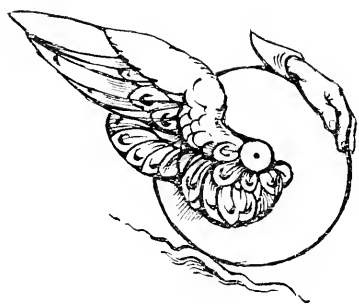


English Flammus



BORGIA

English Flum.



“ . . . AUTANT EN EMPORTE LY V&NS ”

PERSONS

POPE ALEXANDER VI . . .	<i>formerly Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia</i>
CARDINAL CESARE BORGIA . . .	<i>afterwards Duc de Valentinois and Duke of Romagna, the Pope's son</i>
DON JOFFRÉ	<i>Duke of Squillace, the Pope's younger son</i>
LOUIS XII	<i>King of France</i>
DON JUAN	<i>King of Navarre</i>
CARDINAL FRANCESCO BORGIA	<i>cousin to the Pope</i>
CARDINAL IPPOLITO D'ESTE .	<i>son of the Duke of Ferrara</i>
CARDINAL GIULIANO DELLA ROVERE	<i>afterwards Pope Julius II and other Cardinals.</i>
PRINCE DON ALFONSO . . .	<i>Duke of Bisceglia, a natural son of the King of Naples, husband to Lucrezia Borgia, after her divorce from Giovanni Sforza</i>
PRINCE DJEM	<i>the Sultan's brother and the Pope's hostage</i>
THE BISHOP OF VENOSA . .	<i>the Pope's Private Physician</i>
MONSIGNORE BONAFEDE . .	<i>Bishop of Chiusi</i>
MONSIGNORE BURCHARD . .	<i>Master of the Ceremonies</i>
MONSIGNORE GASPARE POTO .	<i>the Pope's Private Chamberlain</i>
MONSIGNORE GASPARE TORELLA	<i>Cesare Borgia's Physician</i>
CAVALIERE VINCENZO CAL- META	<i>a poet</i>
DON PEDRO DE TORPIA . . .	<i>Cesare Borgia's Spanish jailer</i>
DON MICHELOTTO CORELLA .	<i>one of Cesare Borgia's captains</i>
DON FEDERICO ALTIERI . . .	<i>a young Roman gentleman</i>
DON GARCILASO DE LA VEGA	<i>Spanish Ambassador</i>
MESSER NICCOLO MACCHIA- VELLI	<i>Florentine Envoy</i>

MESSER BERNARDINO BETTI

(PINTORICCHIO) *a painter*

MESSER ERCOLE *a goldsmith and metal-worker*

MESSER CRISTOFERO *Lucrezia Borgia's Secretary*

MESSER AGAPITO DA AMALIA *Cesare Borgia's Secretary*

MESSER PINCIONE *an apothecary*

JUANITO GRASICA *Cesare Borgia's page*

GARCIA DE MAGONA *a Spanish boy*

GIORGIO *a waterman*

DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA *the Pope's daughter*

DONNA ADRIANA BORGIA *the Pope's cousin*

DONNA ANGELA BORGIA } *Maids of Honour to Lucrezia*

DONNA HIERONYMA BORGIA }

DONNA SANCIA D'ARAGON *sister to Don Alfonzo and wife to
Don Joffré Borgia*

MADemoisELLE CHARLOTTE

D'ALBRET *afterwards wife to Cesare Borgia*

DONNA VANOZZA DE' CATANEI *once the Pope's mistress, and the
mother of Cesare and Lucrezia
Borgia*

DONNA GIULIA FARNESE (LA

BELLA) *the Pope's young mistress*

DONNA FIAMMETTA *A Roman woman, Cesare Borgia's
mistress*

DONNA CATILENA DE VA-

LENCE *Maid of Honour to Lucrezia*

SUOR LUCIA *an Anchoress*

CLARICE *Maid to Lucrezia*

*A Mute, Shepherds, Citizens of Rome, Attendants, Bargemen, Girls
and Women*

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BORGIA

A PERIOD PLAY

LONDON

A. H. BULLEN

1905

BORGIA

ACT I

SCENE I

An apartment of the Vatican : at the further end the door of the Treasury by which the LORD CARDINAL CASANOVA is seated. The LORD ALEXANDER VI. and an ENVOY from Naples. The POPE is seated : from time to time he plunges his hands into a coffer of pearls, letting the pearls stream through his fingers.

ALEXANDER.

All are for her ! Each an epitome
Of her—the very skin of them her own,
Our Pearl above all others. So your monarch
Will mate his nephew with her ?

ENVOY.

He consents, Holiness,
Having o'erlooked the letter
Giovanni, lord of Pesaro, has written
In affirmation of her virgin state—
The fault being his.

ALEXANDER.

This sorry Milanese !
He raves with spite and proves himself a man
By foul detraction of her family.
We chuckle at the weakling. He may hoot !
Your Don Alfonso is a noble lad,
A girl's new phoenix. . . .

But your master pauses
To give his only daughter to my son?

ENVOY.

A cardinal !

ALEXANDER.

A cardinal, we cannot yet release him
From vows—your ear!—he holds detestable.
My second son, where were his livelihood
Without the Church's revenue? All prudence
Must hold him to the priesthood for a while.
Betroth him to the daughter of your king—
Your king and I, at leisure, will provide
Some principality for Cesare
To match his sees and yielded cardinalate.

ENVOY.

Make it God's law your Cardinal may wed,
And then, his scarlet hat within his hand,
My lord the king would take him as a son.
Now, the proposals of your Holiness
Are but—poetic.

ALEXANDER.

No, no! The royal princess
Carlotta—is her bent our way?

ENVOY.

She flat refuses the lord Cardinal.

ALEXANDER.

She has not seen him, blond and beautiful.
A churchman! You may look with candlelight
To find his tonsure. Even my dear Giovanni
Is only half a prince, his brother by,
Although a rare one in his splendid right.
And as for mode and elegance all know
Our youthful Cardinal is just a gallant
Most Frenchified in form.

Well, well, well! I am dreaming:
Poetry, you call my dreams. . . .

This pleasant marriage
Of Don Alfonso and my Donna Lucrece

Will make us jaunty in the Vatican.

My pearls!—

You watch them through my fingers—lucent lumps ;

This pear-shaped ovule heavy with its light ;

The pearls and pearllets dropping

With patters loud and soft together—listen !

My daughter will have more and lovelier pearls

Than any woman in the greedy world.

Would you have sight of one large coffer filled,

This emulates ?

[*Rising*]. There is the treasury door,

There the Lord Casanova, full of winks

At voices from the cave.

Enter MONSIGNORE GASPARE POTO.

POTO.

Your Holiness,

I sought his Excellence the Duke Giovanni

In his apartments, but he is not there.

ALEXANDER.

[*To the ENVOY.*] So strange ! My son the Duke of Gandia,
fails me

To-day with greeting, and to-day we fix

The hour when I review his armaments

Under our blessèd gonfalon. 'Tis strange.

[*To POTO.*] Go to Madonna de' Catanei's house :

His mother made a supper, I was told,

For him and for his brother.

[*Exit* POTO.

[*To the ENVOY.*] You conduct

Don Cesare when, next month, as our Legate,

He goes to crown your king ?

ENVOY.

My hope !

ALEXANDER.

And now the pearls !

Open, Lord Casanova.

[*The treasurer unfolds the door and discovers DONNA GIULIA FARNESE and DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA in Neapolitan dressing-gowns of white silk, their golden hair untressed, choosing jewels for their nets.*

BORGIA

Indiscreet ?

Laugh, ladies—do not blush. A pair of swans !

[*Taking GIULIA's wrist.*] No, no, Madonna—no,
My Giulia—not the ruby ! You must match
Your lovely eyelets with the diamond.

GIULIA.

Always

The diamond, Holiness.

ALEXANDER.

You shine, you shine !

Lucrece, my softer radiance—what, my Pearl ? [*He kisses her.*
Draw out the heavy coffer,
Lord Casanova. Open it ! The sight
Grows slippery on these burnished domes !

There, there—ah, there

Is patrimony. . . .

ENVOY.

Wondrous !

ALEXANDER.

Tell your master.

[*His arm round his daughter.*] Lucrece, the King of Naples
sends his nephew

To cheer your maiden widowhood. Next month
You will be bride and wife.

LUCREZIA.

So soon !

ALEXANDER.

Santi ! she quarrels

In maidenwise with time ! You shall not leave me,
As when you wept at Pesaro. Your Prince
Consents ! Alfonso is of lusty frame—
Good face and eyes. . . . I speak him as he is ?

ENVOY.

The handsomest youth of Naples.

ALEXANDER.

There, my girl!

So end your troubles ! 'Tis a swelling shoot,—
 'This bridegroom.

LUCREZIA.

May Madonna prosper me !

ALEXANDER.

[*Crossing himself.*] The glorious Virgin—to that prayer,
 Amen !

[*To the ENVOY.*] Our daughter bent obedient to our will
 Her idle marriage should be set aside,
 By mercy flawless and canonical,
 With modesty's reluctance : she will bless
 Our older wisdom in Alfonso's arms.
 No clouding, Pearl !
 We can but laugh exultantly to open
 Our treasury and find, as in a case,
 Two perfect jewels of Pandora's kind.

LUCREZIA,

[*In a whisper to the POPE.*] The orator will disesteem me thus,
 In spreading hair and *schiavonetto*.

ALEXANDER.

Never

Will any man but worship loveliness
 Wrapt loosely and dishevelled.

Charm, my fair ones, charm

Is simple in ascendancy.

Re-enter MONSIGNORE GASPARE POTO.

POTO.

Madonna

Vanozza de' Catanei bids me say
 His Excellence the Duke of Gandia left her
 At nightfall, riding with Don Cesare,
 After a merry supper. Shall we search, Holiness,
 His lordship's haunts ?

BORGIA

ALEXANDER.

O Poto, Poto, search
His haunts ! The malice of these chamberlains !
Madonna Giulia, Monsignore Poto
Would search the place where Don Giovanni hides.
Have mercy on my son !

GIULIA.

Monsignore finds
Your Holiness so jovial he is conquered
By the same vein.

LUCREZIA.

Excuse him !

ALEXANDER.

Even our ladies, Poto,
Plead for the Duke's seclusion. Without doubt
He waits for sundown to forsake the place
Where he was sociable.

LUCREZIA.

Then is Giovanni
So wary in his fancies ?

ALEXANDER.

Oh, for my sake—
But you forget it—for his father's sake . . .
To-night he will be with us—we have patience :
Though not to fix when we review his troops,
That is a fault and we must chide our Captain.
Well, my Lord Casanova, close
Your treasury : we would not lose such jewels !

SCENE II

A Room in the LORD CESARE BORGIA'S Palace of Borgo Sant' Angelo.

MESSER BERNARDINO BETTI (PINTORICCHIO) and MESSER ERCOLE are waiting to deliver a ceremonial sword.

Enter LORD BONAFEDE, Bishop of Chiusi.

BONAFEDE.

The worshipful Lord Cardinal is coming ;
I have announced you. The ambassadors
Had taken leave.

[Examining the sword in the hands of MESSER ERCOLE.

By Hercules—your pardon,
Yet by your name, as if it were divine—
This queen of swords is warlike, not of peace
In its adornment as a legate's sword . . .
A legate, *tamquam pacis angelus*,
In Holy Father's phrase. O sirs, the shame
That such a soldier—what condottiere
In Italy would match our Cardinal—
Is wasted on the Church.

PINTORICCHIO.

Lord Bonafede !

BONAFEDE.

I speak out of my flesh. I have gone ever cursing
The tonsure where the helmet should have been.
I am a man-at-arms, the jangling glories
Of panoply are dearer than the bell
That dins the raising of God's sacrifice.
Come, Messer Bernardino, you can mingle
Your saints with Pagan bulls and goddesses
Who love their gods by Nile.

Cesar !

Enter the LORD CARDINAL CESARE BORGIA.

CESARE.

The sword !

So I receive my fate. *Cum numine
Cesaris omen.* *[He holds the sword erect and kisses the motto.*

The Lord Cardinal's Sword,
 The Legate's Sword ! I laugh . . . it is at others,
 The names they call me, when I have one name
 Hot at the core of fixedness, my heart.
 O antique Cesar, conqueror and fount
 Of empire, thou wert made my saint at birth ;
 Thou art my spirit and my augury,
 Thy laurels guard me and thy eagles' wings.
 My eyes are on thee and thou lead'st my dreams
 To homage and thy triumph. *Dive Cesar,*
 Here is thy name
 Cut as I bade upon thy chariot-wheel,
 Since triumphers can use the spokes of Fortune
 For carriage of their prevalence.

My thanks

To you, dear Bernardino, I have always
 Loved for your gifts, esteemed as one of ours,
 Who wove our life round with the signs and legends
 Denoting us by power of phantasy ;
 I thank you for this emblem of my soul,
 Prefigured in these lovely images.

My equal thanks

To you, good Messer Ercole, for strength
 And nobleness of handiwork, the craft
 That has subverted matter, as the god
 Turned chaos to a fabric. Ah, and the work,
 Your work, is done, signed of your fame and done.
 You are most happy. Mine is all an absence
 As yet, a future ! But the pledge is mine—
 This sword, your creature, and my prophecy.

PINTORICCHIO.

Beloved and Cesar, you have been our poet ;
 From you our valid agency, from you
 The teeming of the parable.

ERCOLE.

You notice
 The azure guard ? It pleases you ?

CESARE.

As spring's
 Sky-blue. Lord Bonafede, you that savour

The taste of steel, run with your finger down
 These grooves : now see the contour and the curves,
 The equilibrium, so beautiful
 I worship it with reverence. Now bend
 Above the glass, like adamant, and trace
 My hero in his deeds.

Here is a mighty deed,
 And one that was of doom. This floating ensign,
 These naked horsemen at the riverside,
 The child, with wreath of laurel, by the flood
 Playing his flute to outset of a life. . . .
 For this is Cesar crossing Rubicon.
 Here are his very words : "The die is cast." . . .

Enter MONSIGNORE GASPARE POTO.

POTO.

Your Worship,
 His Holiness requires you instantly ;
 For he is gnawed by deep inquietude.
 The Duke your brother has been missed two nights,
 Has disappeared without a trace. . . .

CESARE.

What, lost ?

POTO.

The Holy Father shakes with agitation ;
 His emissaries seek the city through,
 And he is grievously impatient, asking
 The aid of heaven and earth. You saw the Duke
 At the Madonna de' Catanei's house.
 His Holiness would question you.

CESARE.

I come.

[They wait while CESARE stands absorbed.]

POTO.

Pardon ! The Holy Father is in wrath
 As well as fear.

CESARE.

I come. Oh, my Lord Bonafede,
 The sword is in your charge. . . .

And see this picture—

The Borgian Bull,
A victim at its feet. The flames are blown ;
There will be sacrifice ! It was a dream
I told to Messer Bernardino. . . .

[*To POTO.*] Swift,
Come swiftly to the Vatican ! Giovanni—
Well, is he dead, or will he yet return ?

SCENE III

The Vatican : a room overlooking the Tiber. It is twilight.
DON JOFFRÉ BORGIA and DONNA SANCIA D'ARAGON, *who is*
weeping, look out from a distant window ; near at hand
the LORD CARDINALS FRANCESCO BORGIA and BARTOLO-
MEO OF SEGOVIA are also looking out.
The LORD ALEXANDER VI. is pacing backward and forward.

ALEXANDER.

[*Pausing by the CARDINALS.*]

Those lights . . . those fireflies
Out on the river, do they dance above him
Fast as they swarm and change ?

CARDINAL BORGIA.

You must not watch them.

ALEXANDER.

It takes my mind off from the pictures sweeping
As in a fever, through it. Fast they come. . . .
[*He begins to pace again, his arm in* CARDINAL
SEGOVIA'S.

Cesare's picture

Of how they parted on the Banchi Vecchi ;
The strange masked figure that Giovanni swung
Up to his saddle as he rode away,
Away—

I see him in the midsummer, calm night—
Toward the Jews' quarter in Sant' Angelo,

Toward the dark Sistine Convent, and beyond . . .
Ha, to the quarter of our deadly foemen,
The Bears, the vile Orsini.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

That looks ill.

ALEXANDER.

And he was never seen again. His brother
Says the masked recreant came behind a vine-stock,
And motioned to Giovanni secretly:
He says Giovanni
Was red and vehement as he turned back
To feasting at the table. . . . Ah, more pictures!
A new one, painted wet upon my brain
Over the rest!

[Stopping suddenly in the middle of the room.

Where is he,—my young son,
My beautiful Giovanni? You stand round,
Wise with the Church's wisdom, but where is he?
He may be living, tortured, gagged. . . . He is not!
No, there is come a change in me; I know
He is not breathing with me any more,
And yet I cannot bid you pray for him;
I do not count him dead. He is but lost,
And lost so deep I do not think a creature,
Nor even his Creator knows the place
That he has wandered to. The lost must wander,
They have no goal, not even hell, no rest.
They have their freedom as the unbaptized
To rove in horror where none plucks the sleeve
Or questions them or bids good-day.
They wander on till they are flitting ghosts,
Till they are elemental and dissolved,
And when they would entreat us, they must rail
In the howling wind about our chimney-stacks.
So I encounter my Giovanni—so!
So I was tutored of the storm last night.
He is not breathing with us any more!

CARDINAL BORGIA.

Have faith, his body will be found.

ALEXANDER.

His body !

When last I saw the boy
 He shook his golden poll with merriment
 That I received his Spanish mistress here,
 A most devout and humble Catholic,
 With eyes dark wells for Cupid's thirst. He laughed,
 Till all the room was sunbeams from his mirth.

DONNA ADRIANA ORSINI *enters, supporting* DONNA LUCREZIA
 BORGIA. *They are deeply veiled.*

If God
 Turn such a thing as that to carrion—then
 I shall curse God. [*He makes a gesture of imprecation.*
 [*Turning to LUCREZIA.*] Well, wanton, you look white !
 What comfort have you ? Would you be a nun
 That you crept to San Sisto from your palace
 Soon as you heard ? Is not this missing boy
 Your brother ? You would steal from any noise.
 The tumult of the people and its rage
 Is round Giovanni's name ; but yesterday
 The bruit of the town was of Lucrezia.
 If any, you should suffer from men's tongues,
 And you refuse to suffer. All reproaches
 Drive you more dumb. But now you shall not cloak
 This mystery as if it were a relic.
 You have been with the boy : you know
 Where he loved, where he was hated. All our loves
 And hates are in your hands. You have grown more blind
 Than any woman ever made herself
 That she might see in the dark.

Give up your witness.

[*LUCREZIA remains before him silent, with open mouth.*
 A little devil, circumspect,
 When I would have rank truth.

[*To the CARDINALS.*] Are these my children ?
 Oh, but I spare them . . . we must spare our bastards,
 It says in Holy Writ. [*He goes towards the further window.*

LUCREZIA.

[*In a whisper to ADRIANA.*] Giovanni. . . . Yes. . . .
 He is very rash and very quick to wrath,
 Yet dear in his quick temper. I have seen him

Too little since he came from Spain. Pray God
I may look on him again !

ALEXANDER.

[*From the back.*] Joffré, you stand
Like a fixed statue draughty in a niche :
I do not pin you there. Go all of you ! Go hence !
Sancia, I am ashamed that you should sit
Weeping what is not of your blood. Get up !
Out of my presence ! You all stand and gaze
As at a play—perhaps a comedy.

[*JOFFRÉ and SANCIA go out.*

[*To LUCREZIA.*] And you—unnatural, go hence !

[*ADRIANA makes a gesture of appeal : ALEXANDER waves his hand wrathfully. As the women go out, an usher meets them, closely followed by MADONNA DE' CATANEI.*

God's breath,

His mother !

[*The usher speaks to LUCREZIA. LUCREZIA puts her arms round her mother's neck.*

We are here in privacy.

[*To CARDINAL BORGIA.*] Bring her in hither to me.

[*VANOZZA, holding LUCREZIA'S hand, is conducted to the POPE. She falls at his feet : he raises her.*

O Vanozza,

Poor heart !

VANOZZA.

My Lord, your Holiness, I came—
Forgive me.

ALEXANDER.

Nay ! [*He falls sobbing on her shoulder.*
We mourn together. Where we had a son
For eyes' delight, there is nothing.

[*Soothing and patting VANOZZA.*] Hush, you must not !
Little beloved, you suckled him. You must not !
Go home ; pray to Madonna.—She will hear.
And let me see your face.

[*Drawing her veil.*] It is the same ;
As honest and as good.

[*He holds her face in his hands.*

BORGIA

VANOZZA.

I have good children.
I am so richly blessed . . . and this dear boy,
A Prince from Spain, came back again and kissed me.

ALEXANDER.

Good son and enviable righteousness
To kiss this face in filial piety.
There, there, you must forget him !

[GASPARE POTO *approaches*.

Poto,

You pull my skirts.

POTO.

Come quick. A waterman. . . .

ALEXANDER.

[*Steadying himself against VANOZZA.*

Then tell me, Poto. . . . Let me know from you.

[*He moans.*

POTO.

I cannot tell you more ; he waits to speak.

[POTO *supports the POPE to where the waterman
GIORGIO stands with an Inquisitor at the further end
of the room.*

LUCREZIA.

[*Suddenly coming to VANOZZA.*

Cesare ! . . . Mother, we must cling to him.

VANOZZA.

Where is he ? In these halls ? It dazes me. . . .

[*Watching the POPE.*

God's image on the earth ! I was profane. . . .
And you a Princess, too ! O my Giovanni !
You, all of you, are but as visitants ;
You are enskied afar. Happy, unhappy mother !
Child ! O sweet, floating hair against my cheek,
And your cold cheek. . . .

LUCREZIA.

Mother, but you were happy
When Cesar and Giovanni supped together ?

VANOZZA.

I never saw them both more gay or fair ;
 They plagued each other like two golden lances
 Crossed in the sunshine at a tournament—
 And so till Cesare had warned the hour.

LUCREZIA.

We must cling to him.

VANOZZA.

Can I give a thought
 To any but my lost, my lost Giovanni,
 My all but God—and to my God? Lucrece
 Turns with her mother to His Throne of Mercy?
 O Child ! *[Her cry echoes one from the POPE.]*

ALEXANDER.

Hush, hush ! . . . It is incredible.
 The horror swallows me. Hush, hush !

Laid over

The white horse ! . . .

[Advancing.] O Madonna de' Catanei,
 Go with the girl away. You shall have tidings.
 His mother—go !
 My blessing, child. I have no more to say.

[Exeunt VANOZZA and LUCREZIA.]

Good Adriana, follow them.

ADRIANA.

And you, Rodrigo ?

ALEXANDER.

Follow them.

[Exit ADRIANA.]

*Sancta Dei Genetrix,
 Turris Davidica, Refugium
 Peccatorum, Virgo clemens !—*

[Returning.] What is this, Francesco,
 He tells you further? Nay,
 You will not broach the facts? He saw these men
 Creep back and other two come stealing downward,
 And the white horse—and what it bore.

[To CARDINAL SEGOVIA.] Your arm !

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Spare yourself, Holiness.

GIORGIO.

I told the Inquisitors

All as it happened.

ALEXANDER.

Tell me.

GIORGIO.

By the Tiber

They turned the horse and swung the body down

In heavy mire and litter. I could see

A bulrush sucked at by the risen billow,

And how a winding object swam along,

Lapped by the current—'twas the dead man's cloak.

They pelted it with stones: then. . . .

ALEXANDER.

[*To CARDINAL BORGIA, who supports him.*]

Cousin—O Francesco,

And I have wit to ask where this was seen.

POTO.

On the Rispetti, by the Ospedale.

ALEXANDER.

[*To GIORGIO.*] Then go and tell the fishermen; direct
Those foolish, flitting lights that drive me mad.[*GIORGIO moves away.*]

Why have you held your peace?

GIORGIO.

A hundred times,

From my beached boat

What I have seen I saw—none cared to hear.

[*Exit with Inquisitor.*]

ALEXANDER.

Thrown out as dust and refuse to the river,

My worship!—leaving me

As one who is no more. My life's high hope

Snatched under darkness, sodden,
 A dead boy, who was proud and beautiful.
 Francesco, in a single night ! O Cousin,
 I thought that he was comforting his youth
 In a kind Thais' arms and he was down
 At the bottom of that river !

CARDINAL BORGIA.

Nay, dear Holiness,
 Has not this Giorgio seen a hundred times . . .

ALEXANDER.

You think Giovanni lives ?

CARDINAL BORGIA.

God grant it !

ALEXANDER.

He has ridden
 Beyond the walls, at some castello wooing
 Maiden or wife, since summer bans the chase ;
 A foolish pastime 'mid infested country !
 But now the vineyards are as silken tents
 For Amor's camp. I am too precipitous
 In passion : I must wait another night,
 And then . . . fold him again
 Upon my heart ! Go back, go back, my heart !
 Patience ! *[He finds himself at the window.]*

But see, there, see
 The lights are sailing to one point. Out yonder
 What is that spot of dusk ?

POTO.

The Ospedale.

ALEXANDER.

A constellation !
 Malign, bright stars ! Giovanni ! But the lights
 Are moving onward to Sant' Angelo.
 They move along in state. It is my son !
 They dazzle me. . . . They pass me. . . .

Enter MONSIGNORE BURCHARD.

BURCHARD.

Holy Father,
The illustrious Duke of Gandia has been found
In velvet coat and cloak, the dagger sheathed,
His ducats in his purse.

ALEXANDER.

It sails, it sails, it sails
On to Sant' Angelo. The torches. . . .

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Nothing is stol'n?

BURCHARD.

No, not a single gem.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Vendetta? Are there wounds?

BURCHARD.

I counted seven;
One mortal in the throat. His hands were tied.

ALEXANDER.

[*With a howl like a lion's.*] God, by God's blood, my curse!
[*He falls in a swoon.*]

BURCHARD.

[*Lifting both hands.*] His Vicar here on earth!

CARDINAL BORGIA.

[*Who kneels and supports the POPE.*] Beware!
His father must not see him.

BURCHARD.

Washed and habited
As Gonfalonier, on an open bier,
He will be borne,
With flambeaux, to his mother's private chapel,
And will be swiftly hidden!
[*Shrugging his shoulders.*] But, my lords,

The populace is ribald : it acclaims
 His Holiness the fisher of his son,
 Though not, by rights, of men.

[POTO and the CARDINALS laugh.]

ALEXANDER.

[*Slowly opening his eyes.*] Francesco, are they talking of my son ?

SCENE IV

A room in the LORD CARDINAL CESARE BORGIA'S Palace of Borgo Sant' Angelo.

It is dead midnight : lights are burning. LORD CARDINAL CESARE, in the black satin dress of a Spanish gentleman, with jewelled poignard, reclines on a couch. He appears to be sleeping, except that now and again he slowly rolls from hand to hand a gold ball of perfumes. His Spanish page JUANITO GRASICA is asleep. Behind the couch, across a table, the great ceremonial sword lies naked, and near it is a new purchase, the sleeping Cupid with broken foot of MESSER BUONAROTTI.

DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA enters with DONNA ADRIANA ORSINI, whose hand she clasps : she looses it, and, after a moment's pause, comes to her brother.

LUCREZIA.

Madonna Adriana brought me here ;
 She stays without : I go back to the convent.
 Cesare—tell me all that I should pray.

CESARE.

[*Turning his head back towards her from the couch.*

Amanda, that your scruples be removed ;
 That I be Cesar.

LUCREZIA.

Take a little rest.

CESARE.

Shall you, from prayer ?

To-night you look a sibyl.

Who did this deed ?

LUCREZIA.

Let Juan play the lute ;

You must have music through these restless nights.

How lost you look !

CESARE.

You startled me. How lost !

[He closes his eyes.]

LUCREZIA.

[Stealing away to ADRIANA.] He is dreaming ; he has quite forgotten me.

Come, Adriana, soft ! As an astronomer

He must not be disturbed : he is quite lost.

SCENE V

*The POPE'S Bedroom in the Borgia Apartments at the Vatican.**The LORD ALEXANDER VI. is extended asleep on the bed.**The LORD CARDINAL BARTOLOMEO of Segovia and MONSIGNORE GASPARE POTO.*

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

I thank God for this sleep. Those fearful days

I knelt against his door ! The raving wildness

I heard at times—inhospitable sorrow,

Aloof from our Creator ! Then, dashed down,

The heavy frame wept like a haunted child's.

Then silence

Too perilous to spread ! I beat the door.

POTO.

We stood and watched and prayed you might prevail.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

And when he opened—Jesu, he was faded
 As a dead fish ; slack chin, and Arab eyes
 Glassy in fever, with a vengeful thirst.
 If only he had known the murderer,
 And could have struck him down to deepest hell—

POTO.

Each moment
 He snatches ends of this dark mystery,
 As he unravelled at the dead of night
 The broidery on a frame he could but feel.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

True, true ! It turns the brain that no one knows.
 Some whisper 'twas the Lord of Pesaro
 Revenged himself for ridicule and the shame
 Of his divorce.

POTO.

[*Shaking his head.*] He has no credit here.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Some roundly have it
 The Lord Ascanio Sforza did the deed,
 For he and Gandia quarrelled the same day
 That our fine Duke was struck.

POTO.

It was a masterpiece
 Of secrecy—this murder.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

No more news?

POTO.

By item all I know is told to you,
 My Lord Segovia.

ALEXANDER.

[*From the bed.*] Ah !

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

I will retire,
And send the Lord Francesco Borgia up
To urge his cousin's appetite.

Behold !

[POTO, turning to the bed, finds the POPE sitting up, a
beatific smile on his face.]

ALEXANDER.

But I have seen my son in Paradise . . .

POTO.

How fares your Holiness this morning ?

ALEXANDER.

Poto,
There was no scar on him, not the least wound ;
That is the truth : and he stood armed again.
As bright as San Michele he looked down
Upon us from the wall, his gonfalon
Swathing around him as he stood. His face
Was to me as an angel's.

[*He weeps quietly.*] I repent,
I will change all to meet that boy again
In Paradise, no wound on him, no scar.
And yet the sight of him,
O Poto, drove down to the rasping quick
Of conscience through my heart. All shall be changed,
The Vatican be cleared of sin. These bastards . . .
Let me not see them more ! Joffré, Lucrezia—
Joffré must mind his government afar,
I banish him. Lucrece—oh, I shall gather
The seas between us ; she shall dwell in Spain,
Dwell in Valencia, deep, where I was born,
White little demon-girl !

[*He rises, trembling, and POTO robes him.*] No priest hence-
forward
Shall hold two benefices ; simony
No more shall breed among us. God would punish
Some sin in us ; it could not be Giovanni
Deserved a death so cruel. Gently, Poto,
You are too violent.

POTO.

Patience, Holiness,

You slit the silk.

ALEXANDER.

Where is the Cardinal

I called my son? Unnatural, where are they?

The children I have fostered in my bosom,

Where are they?

POTO.

Holiness,

Donna Lucrezia in the Sistine Convent

Prays day and night.

ALEXANDER.

Sweet soul!

POTO.

The Lord Valencia—

ALEXANDER.

Ah, what of him? Where is his piety?

POTO.

When your affliction broke on you, before it
 Men fled as from a pest. Lord Cesare
 Is shut within his palace; duteously,
 Almost from hour to hour, his servants pass
 For tidings of your health.

An USHER appears at the door.

USHER.

The Governor

Of Rome prays for the Presence.

ALEXANDER.

He has tidings?

Oh, it will break my heart! I would lie down
 Within my coffin—and that tapestry
 About the portal, with its shaking folds,
 Opens and shuts the lid. Let him come in.

[The GOVERNOR comes to the PONTIFF'S feet.]

I would not question you; give full relation;
 Do not repeat the tales of yesterday.

GOVERNOR.

Most Holy Father, there is little new
Of the Lord Duke to certify—his mule
Was found hard by the Palace Barbarini.

ALEXANDER.

[*To POTO.*] My lad, my lad! We know what beauty there
Looks into Tiber like the moon!

I thank you

For your devotion.

GOVERNOR.

Shall we still further search?

ALEXANDER.

Expressly, till the recreant be slain.
He dies within my thoughts a several death
Each time I front the dark where he is lost.
God damn him deeper every day! Search, search!

[*Exit* GOVERNOR.]

His mule, and at that spot! Gaspare, breathe around
The Palace, bribe the women. If a stab
From jealousy—we stop the inquisition.
Mea culpa, mea culpa!

Enter the LORD FRANCESCO BORGIA.

O Francesco,
What do you bear so carefully—the Host?

CARDINAL BORGIA.

Nay, but a little food.

ALEXANDER.

I cannot eat.

Gaspare, bear it from the room. Go all
Away from me!

[*Exeunt all save* CARDINAL BORGIA, *who quietly remains.*
Cousin, you wait for news?

It is too true

The boy has perished by his father's sins.

I must make expiation for his lust:

I have lived ill. Before the Consistory

I will make full confession.

CARDINAL BORGIA.

Holiness,
 If I may trust the murmur in my ears
 From men to whose free speech
 I gave safe conduct, it is not for you
 To make avowal. Heaven requires of you
 Such greatness and capacity of pardon
 As in extent it touched the limits of,
 Setting its brand of safety upon Cain.

ALEXANDER.

What, Joffré ?

CARDINAL BORGIA.

No, not Joffré . . . but a son.
 Belovèd, exercise the privilege
 Of God's vicegerent. Wash away this guilt,
 Remove it from you ; pardon secretly.

ALEXANDER.

Not Joffré ? Joffré is my heir. . . . You lay
 A heavy stone upon Giovanni's grave
 To keep me from him. But it is not true,
 It cannot be ! We Borgia do no harm
 To any of our kin.

CARDINAL BORGIA.

And yet to certainty
 Drive the suspicion, and forgive the crime.
 [*The POPE paces, wringing his hands.*]

ALEXANDER.

He never made complaint. I have been thoughtless,
 Thoughtless to Cesare. . . . He has been absent
 Too often from our ceremonies,
 From our investitures. I drove him jealous
 By welcome of his brother out of Spain.
 I did him wrong.

Good kinsman, you have taught me
 To dry my tears . . . and I have still a son.
 Fetch me again the little dish of food,
 The wine. . . . I am grown faint.

See that this bruit
 Come never to his mother. He is all

To her as if he were her eldest born.
 God knows my love to him is infinite !
 But—bid him keep his palace. I forbid
 His presence here. . . . My sins have plunged my children
 In death and hell, and I must live alone.

SCENE VI

The Vatican ; Sala dei Pontifici.

*The LORD ALEXANDER VI. is enthroned. The LORD CARDINAL
 CESARE BORGIA stands before him, defiant.*

ALEXANDER.

How dare you thus intrude ?

CESARE.

But it is rumoured

It is your will
 The Lord Ascanio Sforza be your legate
 In this affair of Naples.

ALEXANDER.

Ay, my will.

CESARE.

Your Holiness will recollect he lies
 Under suspicion of Giovanni's death.
 You send a blood-stained envoy on this business,
 And thrust me from my place. You have yourself
 To thank for your Giovanni's death ; the honours
 You heaped on him have brought him to his doom.
 Will you bring more
 And greater desolation on your years ?

ALEXANDER.

You shall not go
 To Naples. You forget your brother's death.

CESARE.

I am your legate, if before, so after.
 As for my brother's death, that is but Fortune—
 The spokes of her wheel turned bright on me. I was
 Your second son, enslaved to your vocation ;
 Profane, I touched your sacred things and trembled
 You dared to put me to such use: in secret
 I wrought my sword, my legend. I am Cesar,
 And he is all my omen. By a fate
 So marvellous it rocks my very dreams
 I wake, I rouse myself
 To majesty you put on me, or let it
 Drop downward to the void.

[Motioning to the POPE that he must continue speaking.]

You did not reckon
 With me, you let Giovanni take my place
 Beside you and your throne. None noted me
 Level among the scarlet hats, except
 This goddess with a rudder, this fair child
 Of Jove, this liberator. I am silent,
 Except before confusion such as yours.

[Coming closer to the POPE.]

Blind to the moment—you have not been blind.
 I watched you from Spoleto setting gins,
 I watched you bribe on bribe. . . .

ALEXANDER.

Ay, there you track me,
 And I must answer for my wickedness.
 I owe my seat to wickedness.

CESARE.

Leave weeping !
 There should be pact between us. How your coffers
 Are filled I know, and where your heart is lavish,
 And what you dream. I kneel before your throne
 With faculty
 As boundless as a god's, with strength as supple,
 To be your instrument, to win you lands,
 To give you rule. You have forbidden me
 Your presence : if I pass from it forbidden,
 I leave you—up and down to wave your hands
 In blessing on the powers you supplicate.

While, if you bid me to your side, I build
An army for the Church ; there will be legions . . .

ALEXANDER.

[*Hiding his face in his cope.*] Ah me ! of darkest angels !

CESARE.

Citizens

As once in Rome ; and the Eternal City
Safe from her foes.

ALEXANDER.

You came on me so sudden,
You overwhelm me. . . .
But you shall go to Naples,
And not Ascanio.

CESARE.

Father !

ALEXANDER.

[*Drawing CESARE to him.*] I have wronged you.
Come to my heart.

CESARE.

I will redress the wrong.
[*The POPE kisses CESARE coldly on his forehead, and
blesses him. CESARE passes out.*]

ALEXANDER.

How swift he moves away—as if
With something he had snatched !
Is it my soul ?

ACT II

SCENE I

Rome : the Piazza Novona.

In the centre an antique statue stands, half-excavated, dressed up and painted to represent Proteus as an old man, one of his arms being turned into a dragon, one into a bull. This is the statue called Pasquino, and it flutters with epigrams and satires. To the left the door and steps of the Church of San Giacomo. To the right some houses : behind Pasquino, the Orsini Palace.

It is early—the market-people are beginning to arrive.

The LORD CARDINAL CESARE BORGIA, in the caftan and turban of a Turk, comes out of one of the houses with the Turkish PRINCE DJEM. He stands and looks round from the centre of the Piazza, near Pasquino, and close to the adjacent stone-seat belonging to the old Stadium of Domitian.

CESARE.

Djem, Djem ! let us stay here awhile. We must rest, for our night has been a busy one. How pale the morning looks, the girls unsunned, and the church chilly !

DJEM.

You do not look pale. You look very handsome, dressed as a Turk.

CESARE.

I shall never look so handsome in this dress again ; it will never be so indecent. It is as if a wench were clad as generalissimo—a Cardinal in these fair war-colours. The very broideries have a courage in them. How bold they are ! How they glitter !

BORGIA

DJEM.

You should fight with us in our army.

CESARE.

[*Putting his arm round DJEM's neck.*] You shall fight with me in my army. We have borne such witness against ourselves, and in places where the Cardinals might recount our misdoings, that to-morrow in Consistory, when I make appeal, they will release me from my vow.

DJEM.

Then you will be no longer Christian?

CESARE.

Look there, look at those yellow-garbed Marani. To save life and limb they pay me monies—money for a journey to France. Oh, look at them! They groan, and I am the cause. [*With a gay laugh.*] I am a Christian. [*He sits on the stone bench.*] By the Holy Keys, I could bury myself in these trousers! They almost bury you, and your five daily meals with the sugared water as preamble! What an elephant you are, Djem, in your thirty thousand yards of linen! If I could walk like you! It is the measured step of the elephant and the beat of a Venetian chorus. . . . Then you have killed four people—Ecco!

DJEM.

Ha, ha, ha!

CESARE.

Your eyes are half-closed, but I can see a bluish, glistening sword. . . . Four victims!

[*His hand touches his hilt.*]

DJEM.

Will you take me into your church? They are staring at you, these little girls. You go far.

CESARE.

[*To a girl.*] My little love, your name?

GIRL.

Virgilia.

CESARE.

You find me beautiful? While the Piazza is still empty. . . .
[*He whirls her swiftly round Pasquino.*]

DJEM.

This may not be in the Piazza.

CESARE.

[*Sitting down again.*] You shall see what may be in the Church. Virgilia, you should kiss the Captain.

GIRL.

Not that one.

CESARE.

[*Resting his elbows on his knees and extending his hands to her.*] But who is the Captain?

GIRL.

You, you are the beautiful Captain.

CESARE.

And he has kissed you, remember!

GIRL.

I will bring you melons.

CESARE.

[*To VIRGILIA'S companion.*] What have you for your soldier?

DJEM.

I will give you gems from this chain, little lady, if you will so honour me. Ha, a kiss!

CESARE.

Bought, bought! You are shedding your great clusters.

Enter the LORD CARDINAL IPPOLITO D'ESTE and PRINCESS SANCIA OF SQUILLACE. CESARE lightly greets the PRINCESS, but bows profoundly to the CARDINAL.

Matutinal, fair lady?

SANCIA.

As you.

CESARE.

As I. Matutinal, fresh from the couch, and conducted by divinity to your prayers !

SANCIA.

We do not come from Mass.

CESARE.

Lord Cardinal, I must deliver you from the burthen of your sins. [*Drawing SANCIA to his side.*] A Paynim to a Paynim.

CARDINAL IPPOLITO.

I was conducting the fair Princess home from a masquerade.

CESARE.

Let her join the masqueraders.

[*Exit CARDINAL IPPOLITO, dismissed by a gesture from SANCIA.*]

Djem, is not the devil in her eyes ? Your captives gleam so when they are taken.

SANCIA.

You conduct me to Mass—is that your pleasure ?

CESARE.

It is my pleasure to conduct you.

SANCIA.

An infidel, a bastard Paynim ! The true breed does not flaunt it so licentiously. Sultan Djem, are you curious in our worship ?

DJEM.

I am curious, Madonna, to watch you.

SANCIA.

I am veiled.

DJEM.

Ah, you are not carnal enough to be veiled. Some of our treasure is in caskets, some exposed. To some men it is the knowledge of what is hidden that animates ; to others—

SANCIA.

See, I unveil.

DJEM.

It is useless, Madonna ; you are a spot. . . .

CESARE.

A spot, a temptress, a devil ! How we gather our escort, proceeding !

[He advances up the church steps with SANCIA, followed by DJEM.]

A ROMAN PEASANT WOMAN.

Who is it, Virgilia ?

VOICES.

It is one who rode a white horse.

—You would say a sumpter-mule, for the beast had packs.

—Who is it ?

—It is an Infidel.

—Let us stone him !

—It is one with claws—it is the Devil.

—He walks with Princess Sancia.

—The Duke Giovanni did that.

SANCIA.

Do you hear ? There is another brother. I am between two, and attended.

CESARE.

Does the crowd still keep the legend ?
Off, gentles, you do not know me.

VOICES.

What are you ?

[He turns and fronts them.] The Lord Cardinal !

—The Pope's son !

A FAR-OFF VOICE.

You are the brother of a ghost.

[*Two Spanish Gentlemen of CESARE'S train pass and doff to him.*

—Ugh, the Spaniards !

—Hidalgo !

—Moor !

—Infidel !

—Where is your cut-throat ?

A BOY.

You are the Lord Cesar.

[*CESARE goes up to the BOY and flings a chain round his neck.*

OTHER VOICES.

More allegiance !

Cesar, Cesar !

[*He scatters largesse.*

CESARE.

Lord of the feast, lord of all revels, lord of Rome ! Now read Pasquino's libels—then follow to church.

[*Exit into San Giacomo with SANCIA and DJEM.*

VOICES.

But he has the face of a king.

—I picked a stone and threw—it grew like a millstone when he smiled at me.

—He has a face full of pardon.

—You shamed him with the ghost.

—La, la, la ! He is shameless as a child. You may be ribald before him ; he cannot for very innocence reprove.

—He bade us read Pasquino.

—Come !

—Messer Millini, you are a notary.

—Read !

—Catch these doves round Pasquino, and let us hear them coo.

—What part does he play ?

NOTARY.

'Tis Proteus.

AN ONION-SELLER.

And what is Proteus ?

NOTARY.

An old prophet who changes shape a hundred times and as swiftly as our Pope. Now for the ways of the world, now for the ways of God, and back to old ways once more !

A WOMAN.

Why are Pasquino's arms made creatures? See, a bull. . . .

NOTARY.

The arms of the Borgia. Our Pasquin loves to bait that beast.

ANOTHER WOMAN.

And the snake ?

NOTARY.

Hush ! Am I Pasquino ? The old prophet shall speak.
[*He reads.*

Whelm the Bull-calves, O vengeful Tiber, deign
To take them to thy raging breast ;
And let the monster-bearing Bull be slain,
A victim to Infernal Jove addressed.

VOICES.

Oh, oh, oh !

A FRIAR.

Rome were favoured, indeed, if Tiber had his glut.

A GERMAN PILGRIM.

To think the Pope could promise such good things, and not be able to hold for the space of half a year.

MERCHANT.

Alexander Sixtus ! A quivering reed after the breeze, valiant in power of recovery. *Vivat diu bos, vivat Alexander !*

WOMAN.

His sorrow was too great.

A BANKER.

There is festa about him. All Lent—that is not our Pope. And there is festa about the Bull-calves . . . *Vituli* . . . the same race !

A MELON-SELLER.

Melons, ripe melons !

[*The NOTARY turns and reads to the people behind Pasquino. Laughter and murmurs. The market begins. CESARE and SANCIA come out together from the church. DJEM lingers in the porch, which gradually fills with people from inside the church.*]

SANCIA.

But you will lose her, Sultan Cesare, you will lose her. I am irresistible ; and Lucrezia's husband is my brother.

CESARE.

You knew your destiny. You saved me the tedium of a siege.

[*To DJEM, pointing to the sellers of melons, peaches, grapes, and almonds, who clamour round.*]

Djem, they are too forward. Can you not beat them off ?

DJEM.

A nut, a nut ! But, my gentle ones, a nut ! A pistacchio for these teeth. I bite the nut ; then I bite you.

[*He draws them, laughing, after him among the booths.*]

SANCIA.

You are bold—a Turk at mass ! But I adore the purple. Young Cardinal d'Este grows in my favour. He has eyes. . . . [*In a sudden fawning voice.*] But his eyes are not silver, they are brown, brown as Giovanni's.

CESARE.

Then to be extinguished.

SANCIA.

You will not hurt my little Cardinal—you will not ? Ah, Paynim, had you been chosen for me instead of Joffré !

CESARE.

You have chosen me instead of Joffré.

SANCIA.

My little Joffré is no more to me than the pet foal of the stables. If His Holiness would grant divorce. . . .

CESARE.

What may not His Holiness grant at my suggestion! Commend me by letter to your cousin Carlotta. I shall meet her in France; persuade her to desire me, and your Ippolito shall be safe. I would marry Naples, the rightful line.

SANCIA.

For this you have flaunted me through the stone-staring church! You Borgia! Always the trap in your mighty simplicity. A gull!—I hate you. [DJEM *sidles up*.

DJEM.

Sweets, comfits of coriander. They are welcome?
Madonna, you pick!

[SANCIA *turns from* CESARE.

[DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ARAGON, *with* DONNA VANOZZA DE' CATANEI, *comes up the church-steps from the back. They are in mourning. The Spanish Gentlemen of CESARE's train approach. Instinctively LUCREZIA lets her veil fall aside. Groups stand round her, admiringly.*

LUCREZIA.

Behold!

[*Advancing and patting the jewelled clasp on his shoulder.*

O Cesare, this lovely guise!

You make me feel

A Princess and an Eastern Princess. Jewels

And dusk of jewels. . . . Oh, the snowy turban—

But I have never seen your eyes so blue.

You will despise me in this mourning garb,

Great Sultan.

[*She half-closes her veil and looks round on the group.*

Mother, but your son is bowing,

Is bowing low—salute him. By his side

The Princess Sancia.

VANOZZA.

I salute the Princess.

DJEM.

[*Advancing to LUCREZIA.*] And I—

[*They bow. As LUCREZIA turns from her mother the Spaniards engage her in talk. CESARE stands a little aloof, his eyes on his mother.*

DJEM.

[*Returning to him.*] Don César, but you comprehend
This pearl is for the merchant-men and not
For any private owner in the world :
She must not walk with mothers.

CESARE.

[*Absently.*] Then convert her !
You can convert a woman in a trice
To any worship, if you worship her.

DJEM.

[*Returning to LUCREZIA.*] You are the moon,
The crescent moon. I have seen that in the church.

LUCREZIA.

You have seen the moon beneath our Lady's feet.

DJEM.

You are the Lady. [LUCREZIA *laughs irrepressibly.*

VANOZZA.

Come, Lucrece, away !

CESARE.

But have you, little mother, eyes too pious
To own your son ?

VANOZZA.

I cannot understand.
You are drest as a Turk.

CESARE.

[*Catching DJEM's arm.*] This is my brother.

VANOZZA.

Hush, hush ! An infidel !
And your own brother. . . .

SANCIA.

Ah, so lately murdered !
Madonna de' Catanei, I condole.

LUCREZIA.

Peace, Sancia !
[To VANOZZA.] This noble Turkish Captain
Is brother to the Sultan : Cesare
Instructs him in our Church's mysteries.

DJEM.

I am instructed ; it is excellent.
A good Church !

CESARE.

Mother, this is ill-behaved ;
You are not quite yourself. Give me your blessing. . . .

Here is the sacred spot.

[*He bends and points to his tonsure in the midst of his turban.*

—Then pass away
To the dark shrines and weep !
Mother !

VANOZZA.

[*Shaking her head.*] I have no blessing. I refuse.

CESARE.

Then pass away to the dark shrines and weep !

[VANOZZA *goes slowly up the steps to the church.*

Hither, Lucrezia, hither ! Through the market
For the last time while I am Cardinal !
Hither, sweet boon-fellow !

LUCREZIA.

[*Pulling at the fringe of his turban.*] But call her back.

CESARE.

How fares His Holiness? You cannot dance
 While there are ghostly footsteps on the stair;
 But you can entertain him, make him laugh,
 Till the sunny tears
 Break out from all the creases of his eyes,
 With the report of Djem before the shrines,
 Cesare so profoundly heretic
 He may no more be Cardinal.

LUCREZIA.

[*Showing her small teeth as she smiles.*] Come on!
 I will report with great fidelity.
 I will report
 Djem is a Christian and must be baptized.
 But you! Now as I am your boon-fellow,
 And for the laughter of His Holiness,
 Let us make sport together. . . . Comfits, Djem!
 [*They plunge down into the market-place; the people
 gather and follow them like a train.*]

CONFUSED VOICES.

Vitula! She is for Tiber!
 —Her new husband is there in the Vatican.
 —Her last husband has told us . . . it is not to be spoken.
 —That Turk might be her bridegroom.
 —We know he is her brother.
 —Where is Don Alfonso?
 —Berenice!
 —Pasiphaë!
 —And she laughs like the sky of the first year!
 —Her throat—its pearls are but shadows.
 —She is beautiful as the good Madonna.

SCENE II

The Vatican ; Sala dei Pontifici.

A secret Consistory. The LORD ALEXANDER VI. surrounded by his CARDINALS in their purple. DON GARCILASO DE LA VEGA, Spanish Ambassador, and other Ambassadors.

The LORD CARDINAL CESARE BORGIA is in the midst of an appeal to the CARDINALS. The POPE is watching him, breathless.

CESARE.

. . . From my most early years
I have been secular. Not the least vocation
Is found in me, not in my secret thoughts,
Not in my will, not anywhere within me.
Therefore I sit apostate in your midst,
And therefore do you wrong ; therefore I taint you,
Beside you, and no more your peer. Most humbly
I pray you to release me from my vow.

[There is a guttural murmur.]

CARDINAL BORGIA.

As you have urged

Both eloquently and without offence
Ere this dispute grew hot, His Blessedness
Constrained you in this matter : trust his wisdom.
So Heaven puts shackles on us in our youth,
That in our years we may walk free, Heaven's choice
Become our privilege.

CESARE.

I have received
Rich benefices ; I resign them all.

DON GARCILASO.

For league with France, for favours from a foe,
For contract with your country's enemies.
Most hotly I protest.

[To the CARDINALS.] This renegade,
If you will yield him to such infamy,
Will still go on from false to false, forswearing
His worldly obligations, as through you

He would forswear his pledges to his God.
 The old alliances that prop this Chair—
 Naples and Spain—are mute, and all the parley
 With France. Take heed, take heed, my good lord Cardinals,
 How you raise up a Princedom.

CESARE.

[*Turning his back on GARCILASO.*] But more humbly
 I make petition. How the world esteems me,
 How slander rates me, when I am once unfrocked
 I will answer to the world. You were my peers,
 You are my judges, and from you I ask
 Simply for mercy. Of too great indulgence.
 I was admitted to your fair assemblage.
 Open the door !

DON GARCILASO.

He blazes as a god.
 Look, he is trembling ! This humility
 Is nothing. He who says he cannot play
 The hypocrite is hypocrite in full,
 And plotting for his patron.

CESARE.

That is very truth :
 There, my Lord Cardinals, the word is just.
 I am plotting for my patron, for my sole,
 My unique benefactor.

[*Raising and kissing the hem of the POPE's robe.*

In this habit

I cannot serve His Holiness, whose creature
 I am, and all my faculties acute,
 Conjoined to serve him. I was born a soldier,
 Beckoned to war, and pointed to redemption—
 By steel, not holy water—of those lands
 Bedevilled, once the Church's heritage.
 'Tis as a Captain
 I speak and of my nature. Give me freedom,
 A little time . . . the rest His Holiness
 Shall publish to you of my wars and fortune.

CARDINAL LOPEZ (*Spanish*).

Stay !
 The Scriptures tell us there are many gods
 And lords as many. . . .

DON GARCILASO.

True! Lord Lucifer
Is one of them, and he is kept in bonds
By God's divine discretion.

CARDINAL BORGIA.

Gently!

DON GARCILASO.

Why set him up aloft—why, why? Such eagles
Have dropped down tortoises on shining pates.
Look to your safety!

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Yet we need not shear
Our Samson of his martial strength: Delilah,
And not the Lord, put tonsure on that head.
[*The POPE laughs in his robe*]

CARDINAL OF LISBON.

But all this jesting
Is little to the point, and the point is grave.
Release him—but we cannot. He is bound,
As we, by vows that irk and must be borne.

ALEXANDER.

[*Softly.*] We do not speak it by the Holy Ghost,
But to your private ear and as a Spaniard;
Such benefices as are vacant now,
And such as shall be vacant by your leave,
We shall dispose. . . .

Ambassador, your monarch
Will own us friendly as we fill those Sees.
But, look, we tax too much this youthful patience!
Give your decision, as the Heavenly Dove
Whispers you, fluttering on from head to head.

[*There is murmured discussion for awhile.*]

[*Very softly.*] Thirty-five thousand florins are renounced,
Are in our hands for gift.

O mercy, mercy, mercy!

[*Pointing to CESARE.*] Do you not know
Such guilt is clung about him he must perish

If still he live in blasphemy. I plead,
 I am pleading for his soul. Think, there are frocks in Hell ;
 Think of the scandal
 His licence breeds if we deny him marriage :
 While he is in the Church no reformation
 Can spread against his check.
 It is as if you all—each one of you—
 Sealed with your sapphires his eternal ruin.
 I forced him to this habit, and behold him !
 He has never crooked the knee. Look there, my Lords,
 Look there—Achilles peering from disguise. . . .
 [*Chuckling.*] Pardon, my Lords, as from his maiden dress.
 Mine is the fault, the error. Shall he sulk
 Useless among his tents ?

CESARE.

[*Kneeling.*] Before you
 I plead for liberty—and, being released,
 Whom should I serve save him who honours me,
 Fixing on me his love, on me who have no merit,
 Nor any place nor office in the world
 Except to love him back ?
 [*There is low discussion for a space. DON GARCILASO'S
 voice is heard—"Bought ; I protest, I will protest
 till death."* CARDINAL SEGOVIA advances.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Be comforted, O Blessèdness !
 [*To CESARE.*] Farewell, farewell,
 Lord Cardinal ; excel, as in our ranks you cannot.
 Though often bitter to us in your mood,
 Our skies will miss the lightning and the light
 Without you, and our skies are colourless.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR.

The Duke of Valentinois—so my king
 Greets you with patents disembarked to-day.
 [*The CARDINALS and AMBASSADORS press round CESARE
 to congratulate ; he smiles and bows. Then they break
 into groups and disperse.*

CESARE.

[*Between his teeth.*] Our obstacles
No more in our condition ! Solitary !
No longer of a flock !

[*He turns towards the POPE, who, unnoticed, has remained sitting on his throne, his hands stretched on his knees.*

CESARE steals quietly to his father.

I shall not leave you,
Not ever, not like Joffré, for a wife.
You shall not sit there looking lone—beside you,
Father, a power we have not measured yet,
That we shall measure. After all my wars,
And all my wars will be to draw you peace,
I shall return.

Kiss me.

ALEXANDER.

My heart,

No blessing—oh, a kiss !

SCENE III

A room in the Palace of Santa Maria in Porticu belonging to DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ARAGON. DONNA LUCREZIA sits at the head of a couch ; DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS lies along it. They are both dressed in white satin, embroidered with gold and pearls.

LUCREZIA.

You have seen the little mother ?

CESARE.

To what end ?

My mother ?—No, Lucrezia.

LUCREZIA.

Then some farewell message
That I may comfort her. You start for France,
Cesare, and you leave us for a bride.

CESARE.

What of our mother
 In my alliance? Dead forgetfulness!
 O Beauty, we are passing on our ways
 Of policy; we must pass eagle-eyed,
 For we have thrones to conquer.

Curse your Naples!

I would be wedded there.

LUCREZIA.

[*Stroking his eye-brows.*] There I am wedded;
 Therefore no curse.

CESARE.

[*Suddenly turning and resting his elbow on her knee.*

Lucrece, do you like this boy
 We call your husband? Will he move your love;
 Will you forget your godhead?

LUCREZIA.

Do not forget that you yourself have chosen
 My husband for me.

CESARE.

'Tis but for a season.

We keep the paces of the gods, and all
 Our actions are as theirs irrelevant
 Beside ourselves, as we conceive ourselves.
 Lucrezia, do but feel how thick my hair
 Is brushing up beside the little tonsure!
 There springs the Cesar. You have seen me amble
 Beside Giovanni's stallion on my mule. . . .
 And I am tempered through and through for war.
 While others all day long were waging battle,
 I have gone out to chase—oh, think of it!—
 That I might follow some mean animal,
 And catch the sound of Mars across the lake.
 . . . Your fingers press me . . .
 Why is their touch less soft?

LUCREZIA.

You so desired

What now you have.

CESARE.

Giovanni. . . .

LUCREZIA.

Yes? [*She waits but he says nothing.*
Poor Giovanni! We have enemies.

CESARE.

We have. I silence yours. Are you all tears?

LUCREZIA.

You start for France—
Give me some charge. We part so suddenly . . .
His Holiness . . .

CESARE.

Be gamesome to our father
While I am absent, for he has a trick
Of dwindling down as Tiber on his bed,
Parched Tiber on his bed, when I withdraw.
We are his twin divinities, his Pollux,—
Since Castor is by chance thrust out—his Pollux,
And his most gracious Helen. . . . The rare smile,
The cypher smile! Your spells are on again.
Our father loves the dance—dance to fatigue.

LUCREZIA.

Pas seul; I cannot!

CESARE.

Then. . . .

[*Springing up, he lightly takes her hand, and, looking
into each other's eyes, they dance a slow measure.*

[*As they break off.*] This is the perfect spectacle, I own;
This swells the veins upon the father's brow.
But thou canst dance,
Lucrezia, to thyself as airily
As any creature of the air: dance thus.

LUCREZIA.

[*Laughing.*] Oh, I will dance to giddiness, and yet
 So slow it is the dance within a jewel,
 And infinite movement in a prisoned spark—
 The poets say. I heed them not.

CESARE.

How wisely !

LUCREZIA.

To you I dance.

CESARE.

Oh, when you speak
 From the bosom of your silence. . . . Little, fair One,
 But you are dull ; I want you
 To feel how great are the fresh lusts that haunt me,
 And with complaisance take their part and smile.
 [*Lifting her hand to his breast and keeping it there.*
 Once and for ever—and you falter now !

LUCREZIA.

[*Closing her eyes.*] You are no more a priest. . . .

CESARE.

O little, fair One,
 That deadly languor
 Of being a priest, cut off ! You draw a cry,
 An anguish from me. When I am a king
 You are my counterpart, for evermore
 A place beside me vacant, or your throne.
 When I am Emperor, still I have chosen you
 My counterpart. We played, a little flock,
 Luis, Giovanni, Joffré—you and I
 Were sole to one another.

LUCREZIA.

[*Standing apart.*] We are sole.

[CESARE scrutinises her a long time, then says suddenly.

CESARE.

Come, little Venus,
 Come with me, see the cramoisie, the jewels
 For Cesar's wedding triumph, for the Duke
 Of Valentino's progress. All my trappings
 Are gold—*d'or frizé* : thirty thousand ducats
 Lie in the damasks of my equipage.
 I will put on my doublets—and you too
 Shall try them on.

LUCREZIA.

Fie, fie !

[*She hastily takes a veil and mask.*]

CESARE.

[*Leading her to the door.*] What readiness !—
 Answering, as a woman should, with answer
 So even to my pleasure.

[*A knock.*]

Ah, is that your husband ?

Who is it knocks ?

[*He moves away and masks.*]

LUCREZIA.

But enter !

[*The LORD ALEXANDER VI. stands at the door.*]

CESARE.

[*With a short laugh, unmasking.*] Oh, my father !

LUCREZIA.

But enter, enter, Holiness.

ALEXANDER.

[*To CESARE, as he embraces LUCREZIA.*] My heart,
 Where do you draw the sweetheart ? Cesare,
 Stay—let her breathe the morning to me. Where
 Would Cesare conduct you ?

LUCREZIA.

Blessèd Father,
 To show me all his jewelled taffetas
 And cloth of gold, brocades and silver damasks.

ALEXANDER.

His ! He will look a Phœbus
 That rose and clomb in gold. But for my daughter—
 Her eyes shall rest on veils enmeshed of light,
 Darting their gems of parti-coloured flash
 On stuffs dark-grained enough to set them free,
 Or of a tissue white to blandish them.
 You need not view his gauds, Lucrece.

It is immoment

For her to learn your worldly splendour, boy,
 She, who is treasure.

Sweet, yet we will chuckle

At all the benefices in his stars
 Of gems, his satins. Lead on, Cesare ;
 For we will go together, laugh together.

SCENE IV

The French Court at Chinon.

KING LOUIS XII. *and the* LORD CARDINAL GIULIANO DELLA
 ROVERE (*afterwards* POPE JULIUS II.)

LOUIS.

César de France !
 This gold-haired bastard, with his dubious eyes
 And sullen majesty, each day more splendid
 In silks and gold, more sullen every hour
 Behind his patient smile. . . . Mon Dieu, mon Dieu
 How I have toiled to wed him, and content
 The Pope, who has contented
 My happiness, divorcing my sad wife,
 And joining to my crown my Breton Queen—
 How I have toiled ! If César wants a crown,
 Then in Carlotta he espoused the claim :
 But Naples and his daughter would not listen.

GIULIANO.

He wants a crown !

LOUIS.

Monseigneur Jules as you a triple crown—
Son of Ligurian peasants !

GIULIANO.

Ay,

Of Italy's own soil. But as the vines
Breed flavour by the sod, Liguria
Creates in me survivance to ascend
The Throne my uncle Sixtus made august,
Holding each force ingenerate in man
Executive, building as Titans build.
Only Rodrigo Borgia's Spanish gold
Has kept me unachieved, to bear the sorrow
Of Destiny's elect that wait their star :
There is prepotency in such. This bastard
Tears through his day—a comet—to his fall.

LOUIS.

O Seigneur Dieu !

What bombast and vain glory in his coming.
The Kings of Fez or Ethiopia
Climb out of fewer jewels : our street-gazers
Have scarcely drawn their breath since he passed by,
The little Duke we titled Valentinois !
Yet, by all saints, he loads the air with sway
Of such duplicity and blandishment,
He puts such grace about magnificence,
Such a cold and heat about his speech—I, Louis
Of France, have promised
Soldiers to win him land, my niece to marry.
The papers all are signed. Acquaint the Pontiff,
With largest swell of triumph, Charlotte D'Albret
Of the blood royal is his César's bride.
Cor meum—so he names this slip of his !
And he has been in fury like the Bull
Of his escutcheon at the scarlet waving
Of royal-hearted, contumacious Naples.
Felicitate our weary guest. The lady
Shall meet him in your presence. Saint Denys,
This unfrocked bastard of a priest, what order,
Or what precedence notes him, even his birth

Is sacrilege—he bows too low ! God grant me
One day to set my face against his prayer !

[*Exit* KING LOUIS.

GIULIANO.

God grant that to Pope Julius ! *Domine,
Exaudi me, Pater omnipotens !*
I hate these Borgia ! At their corner-stone,
Where lie their votive gifts of blood and gold
To Fortune, I will shake them—though, in exile,
I serve them for a while, to please this monarch
Whose voice can triple-crown.

Enter DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS.

Illustrious,

I give you joy—a bridegroom, formerly
A Cardinal—much joy !

CESARE.

Thanks ! Are campaigns of war
As tedious as these contracts ? Naples first . . .
Naples will rue her part.

GIULIANO.

And then old D'Albret.

CESARE.

His clutch on ducats and on documents !
My lord, you have reported . . .

GIULIANO.

That the King hangs his wrist upon your shoulder,
That you have won all hearts, all company,
And now a bride is won—the Fleur-de-Luce.

CESARE.

More ! I have royal pledge
Of aid to raise an army that will conquer
The Castles of Romagna for the Church.

GIULIANO.

I give you joy, seeing you never yet
Have formed a line of battle, grouped your pieces . . .

CESARE.

Did Mercury have lessons for the lyre,
Or Hercules in wrestling? Were they not born
Each to his art's perfection?

GIULIANO.

Rarely spoken !

Re-enter KING LOUIS *with* MADEMOISELLE CHARLOTTE
D'ALBRET.

LOUIS.

Mon Duc de Valentinois,
I bring our Dian's youngest nymph, our Queen's
Sixteen-year maiden. Grow acquainted ! Lotta,
You will be well contented with this bridegroom,
As young as he is handsome.

[CESARE *kisses her hand and leads her to a couch,*
sitting by her.

CESARE.

Madame, we are wedded,

A maytime couple, in two days.
Lord Giuliano, tell his Holiness :
Do not delay your letters.

LOUIS.

Come with me and write them,

Monseigneur Jules.

[*They withdraw, leaving CESARE and CHARLOTTE*
D'ALBRET together. CESARE remains passive : he
holds a golden ball of perfume, snuffs, and plays
with it.

CESARE.

So is the world my bauble. . . .

CHARLOTTE.

How sweet the fragrance !

CESARE.

Do not touch it, child !
Now, to be plain, I hear you pleaded hard
That I should be your bridegroom. Have you courage
To mate this dreaded Cesar ?

CHARLOTTE.

Since Carlotta
 Refuses you. . . . [CESARE starts up.
 If you will have the truth,
 As among royal princes, I am chosen
 To wed you by the King and by my father.

CESARE.

[Letting his hand fall softly on her.
 Princess, this is a colloquy of love.

CHARLOTTE.

[Lifting the hand and kissing it.
 Oh, then, lord César, then I take this hand ;
 Then—you are mine.

CESARE.

[In a murmur, looking away.] I shall have lawful heirs.

SCENE V

A Hall of the Vatican with a Loggia at the back overlooking the Via just opened to Sant' Angelo, that is seen in the distance dressed with flags.

In the Loggia several CARDINALS, the LORDS FRANCESCO BORGIA, BARTOLOMEO OF SEGOVIA, GIOVANNI MICHELE, GIANSTEFANO FERRERI and GIAMBATTISTA ORSINI.

In the Hall are DONNA ADRIANA ORSINI, DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ARAGON, DONNA SANCIA BORGIA, DONNA GIULIA FARNESE and DON ALFONSO, PRINCE DUKE OF BISCEGLIA.

DONNA ADRIANA.

Already looking out ;
 The balcony already crammed with watchers,
 That strain beyond the roofs ! But this impatience
 Is almost genius in its quality.
 Poor children, you were hurried from your beds.

GIULIA.

As if there were a fire ; and I am sleepy.
The early morning sleep, the beauty sleep
Dashed from our eyes ! I am not half awake ;
My eyes close, and I must to sleep again.

SANCIA.

You laggard, fie !
You will be out of favour.

GIULIA.

No !

I shall please him better if I am asleep.
He will not wake me,
His Holiness remembers I am young.

ALFONSO.

Young ! If the young may take their fill of slumber—

LUCREZIA.

Come, I so softly stirred you—come, the dawn
Had not more softly coaxed you to awake.

ALFONSO.

I am sick and gaping.

LUCREZIA.

Hush !

SANCIA.

To wake in Naples, not this deadly Rome—
It is the air that kills !

ALFONSO.

A wish

I echo from my heart. We are roused as slaves,
As slaves put in subservient offices.

ADRIANA.

To ride with Prince Squillace by your side
After Duke Cesare is such distinction
You need not sulk from, prince.

SANCIA.

But we are dead afraid.

ADRIANA.

Ah, you have cause!

SANCIA.

What cause? Ippolito is fled.

LUCREZIA.

Ippolito—your beautiful Ippolito!
 Poor little Sancia.

[*Putting her arms round ALFONSO.*

But you must not fly—

Never again. Carissimo, I want you
 For the bloom of every hour.

[*The LORD ALEXANDER VI. enters with DON JOFFRÉ
 BORGIA. They rise and do him reverence. LU-
 CREZIA at once goes up to him.*

ALEXANDER.

My daughter,

My child, you feel it. . . .

[*Taking her hand and laying it on his heart.*

As my heart is beating,
 So beats your heart. There is within my substance
 A change, a miracle. Too great a coming
 And close descent of glory on my head!
 So drooped
 Our blessed Lady at the infinite
 Assault of the Almighty. In my bosom
 How can I crush such agony of joy
 As to receive a Prince,
 A Governor, a Counsellor, all names
 Of prophecy in one. . . .

ADRIANA.

Render to Cesar what is Cesar's—praise
 For a most rare agility. The triumph
 He wills is Pagan. He is young.

ALEXANDER.

Half the Romagna vanquished, Imola,
Forli with battered walls, and the Virago,
Fierce Catarina Sforza, like a Queen
Of Amazon, our Theseus' prisoner.

SANCIA.

For sixteen days she held his arms at bay.

ALEXANDER.

The seventeenth found her ringed around with fire.

LUCREZIA.

[*Assuagingly.*] Dear father,
Think of our Cesar—he is coming home ;
We shall embrace him !
No—you are crying ? He will wear the collar
Of the king's gift. It makes me laugh for gladness.
Laugh too ! I must not cry.

ALEXANDER.

[*Crying and laughing as he clasps her.*] Alfonso, hopeless
The hope that ever you will sunder us !
She is eternal to me as my saints ;
She saves me from all sorrow by her smile,
And she is ever smiling.

ALFONSO.

Then indeed her frowns
She must give me, and I shall take them if
She has not given them away before.
A husband should have something of his own

ALEXANDER.

Ho, child, we eat with varying appetite,
With varying zest : we savour as our palates
Extract the essences. I savour her.
La, la, I speak but as a fool, and gladly
You cannot suffer fools, not being wise.

ALFONSO.

[*Kissing her neck.*] See, Father !

ALEXANDER.

Bacchus, she is blushing red !
My goblet full of pearls has left her marble.
Out on her, out ! I must console myself !

[*Pushing her to ALFONSO and approaching GIULIA.*
Here is my idol, my carnality,
My rose of the flesh—how warm !

ADRIANA.

Lucrezia wrapped her thus.
[*The POPE nods ; then advances to the Loggia.*

ALEXANDER.

Heigh, sentinels,
What recognition of this enemy
Who takes so easily our sacred streets,
For whom our women don their best attire ?
[*He shakes with laughter.*
This is too scandalous ! The balconies,
The heads in wreaths—the mothers and the daughters—
Fie ! But the mothers do not move me.

[*Turning to GIULIA FARNESE whom SANCIA has awaked.*
Giulia,

Look forth, my child. No, do not fix your gaze
On me, on what I look at.

GIULIA.

Holiness,
I fix my eyes on you that you may fix
Your eyes full on La Bella.

ALEXANDER.

Ha, ha ! Morning dew
Salutes us with more dazzle than at eve.
Sleep has been kind.

GIULIA.

But I am drowsy still.
It is not well I should so early stir ;
And I must sleep ; I am so young.

ALEXANDER.

A flower—

You please me well—a poppy-lidded flower !
 Lord Cardinals,
 With your lynx-eyes what do you track beyond
 The open street ?

CARDINAL MICHELE.

Standards, long lances

At Ponte Milvio.

ALEXANDER.

Ha ! We shall be surprised :
 'This victor travels as he made retreat.
 Come, Joffré, you have learnt your part : or is it
 Alfonso plays the squire when he alights ?
 But start each one of you ; in rivalry
 Toil for the privilege.

ALFONSO.

To hold the stirrup !
 I must decline : I cannot stoop so far.

ALEXANDER.

Prince of Squillace, you will hold the stirrup,
 And in your company take Don Alfonso.

ALFONSO.

My wife forbids me leave her.

LUCREZIA.

Nay, Lucrezia
 Has never said *forbid*. I yield my husband
 For just this hour, knowing that all his hours,
 And mine—even Cesare's—are but one glass
[Kissing the POPE's hand.]
 This hand may run the sands of at its pleasure.
 Go, and be mannerly.

[*Exeunt* DON JOFFRÉ and DON ALFONSO.]

SANCIA.

It seems

This bridegroom travels homeward with no bride.

Is he ashamed that, jewelled to the eyes,

He could not win my cousin's hand—Carlotta's?

[*The POPE takes SANCIA's fan from a table and tears it.*]

ALEXANDER.

His bride is Italy.

SANCIA.

I thought she was of France.

ALEXANDER.

He is of France. The fleur-de-luce is broidered

On his banners with our Bull. César de France,

Of Italy—the world. You may retire

From our presence: later we will give you rooms

Convenient in Sant' Angelo. [*Exit SANCIA.*]

Fair ladies, Adriana,

I warn you that this Charlotte of Navarre

Is of no further interest than a city

Captured and left behind. The confidences. . . .

[*Pinching LUCREZIA's chin.*]

What have you heard, Discretion? Not the story. . . .

Enough!

We no more lose our Cesar for a wife,

Treasure, then we have lost you in a groom.

[*Turning to the CARDINALS.*]

Francesco, there is flutter in your robe,

You crane your neck. What of the cavalcade?

CARDINAL BORGIA.

We cannot see it yet.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

We can but see the flags

Beating the sky about Sant' Angelo.

CARDINAL MICHELE.

The cavalcade itself we shall not see,

Not till the cannon roar at its approach.

[*The POPE sinks down exhausted in his chair and closes his eyes.*

ALEXANDER,

Triumphs—St. Peter ! . . .

In a bossy car,

Its base the wide spine of an elephant,
Rode Alexander into Babylon,
Invincible, my namesake and a god.
But not for me the riding, not the shouts,
Though mine the empire : it is Cesar, Cesar,
Who comes to Rome, and this is Cesar's triumph.
The chariots and the laurels and the helmets,
The antique cuirasses and helmets—laurels
Fresh from my gardens : we will act it all
Before the eye to-morrow, and translate
This modern triumph into classic glory,
As epitaphs go down in sounding Latin
To generations after. Cesar's Triumph !
Burcardus shall arrange the pomp, the order,
The circuit of the pageant. Alexander . . . Cesar . . .
Cesar. . . .

[*The cannon boom, all rush to the Loggia.*

LUCREZIA,

[*Running to her father as if for protection.*

O Holiness, but he is coming now !
Oh !

ALEXANDER.

Out to the Loggia ! Cease your clinging, child !
You check my haste, you flutter,
And check me.

[*There is tumult of cannon, shouting and trumpet-blasts.*

[*In the Loggia.*] O my lords, where is he, where ?

[*Looking down.*] My God, what splendour ! But . . .

LUCREZIA.

See, see, that simple rider
In black, the foil to all—you know him, father !
You see his collar of Saint Michel gleam ;
His hair in golden circle—Cesare !

ALEXANDER.

A presence, oh, a presence ! Recollect,
 Daughter, we must receive him as the Pope
 Receives his Captain-General. He is riding
 As in a picture. . . . Help, Lord Cardinals, help me !
 Is the Triregno set about my head
 With nicety ? This jewel flames aside,
 That should be central. Shift my cope. There, there !
 We will go in and take the throne.

LUCREZIA.

[*Throwing a kiss down.*] He has alighted, father.
 [*The POPE, seated, waits, his Court round him.*]

ALEXANDER.

How this remoteness enervates ! Come, come, come,
 come !

[*The door is thrown open, DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS stands gravely on the threshold and makes a deep reverence. He is presented by MONSIGNORE BURCHARD and followed by PRINCE DON JOFFRÉ and PRINCE DON ALFONSO, the GENERALS of his staff, and the accompanying CARDINALS and AMBASSADORS.*]

CESARE.

[*With another deep reverence*]. Your Holiness,
 How can I thank you for the benefits
 That even in absence weighed me with the blessing.
 Of your great recollection.

ALEXANDER.

No, my son, the Church
 Would give you thanks upon my lips for service
 Of princely measure—service. . . .

[*As CESARE bends to kiss the POPE'S foot, ALEXANDER, with a passionate gesture, catches him in his arms.*]

Cesare !

My son ! Superb this beauty ! Home at last,
 Son of my bowels !

CESARE.

Holiness, your captain,
 Your servant, and your creature.

ALEXANDER.

[*Close to his ear.*] No, no, no, my son
By nature, my dear flesh, my very substance
Gone out to victory! Rise! Rise! We must not
Beggar all welcomes other than our own.
Donna Lucrezia—see! . . . Children!

[*PRINCE ALFONSO has come to her and holds her
by the hand.*

CESARE.

A loving couple!

Though one of them fled off awhile ago.

[*To ALFONSO.*] Lured back?

Lucrezia, do you welcome me?

Then welcome me with hands and lips.

[*She drops ALFONSO'S hand and goes quickly
up to CESARE.*

[*As he kisses her.*] Come home!

ACT III

SCENE I

The Vatican—Sala dei Pontifici.

The LORD ALEXANDER VI. and MONSIGNORE GASPARE POTO.

ALEXANDER.

How high the storm is rumbling ! Crack ! What fell ?
Look through the window.

POTO.

'Tis an old ilex-bough,
That sails along like a black, ruffled swan
A space above the ground.

ALEXANDER.

Draw in, draw in, draw in,
My light of service, Gaspare—the wind
Would, if it could, extinguish you.

Go yonder !

Set further in upon the table there
That vase . . . enamel with the whirl-blast round it,
And the enamel matchless ! Did you tell me
My lord Antoniotto Pallavicini
Waits for an audience ? Of a truth, the tempest
Drove not His peace from Christ within the ship.
Well—introduce the Cardinal St. Praxedè. *[Exit POTO.]*
Vespers will sound directly ; but the bell
Of the old, dying day will shape a tinkle
In this mad, hammering gale, and no one hear.

*[Re-enter MONSIGNORE GASPARE POTO with the LORD
CARDINAL ANTONIOTTO PALLAVICINI.]*

Good even, lord Antoniotto.

CARDINAL PALLAVICINI.

Holiness,

What wind !

ALEXANDER.

Santi, it wrenches everything it handles—
 No touching, but possession. Lord Antoniotto,
 You come to seek the dispensation. Poto
 Will tell you when I reached my bed last night ;
 Yet with all industry your business lingered
 Still far beyond my goal. I crave your patience.
 So many festivals this jubilee,
 Processions, triumphs ! O my Lord Cardinal,
 Think—and the great rejoicing yesterday
 When our young Duke received from Holy Church
 The Order of the Mystic Rose that blossoms
 Upon the banks of the abundant rivers—
 Crown of the Church triumphant, militant.
 My lord, the pity you were held at sea,
 Delayed at Ostia too ! Our Duke knelt down ;
 He took the emblem, kissed the hand, and kissed
 The foot of Christ's vicegerent ; then together
 We stood erect, and he advanced ; for once
 He went before me—that was joy !—before me,
 The Rose in his right hand, the hovering Dove
 On his beretta, with its fretted rays,
 A nimbus round him from the monster pearls,
 And he before me like a star of heaven !
 You have heard the Sacred College makes him Vicar,
 Duke of Romagna, Count of Imola,
 Forli ? There were some seventeen Cardinals
 Signed, when I signed the Bull.

CARDINAL PALLAVICINI.

And I away from Rome !

ALEXANDER.

Poto, shut down that casement.

Hoo ! I shiver—shiver !

A cold so keen and violent.

CARDINAL PALLAVICINI.

I will aid him.

Your Holiness is prudent.

[*At the window.*]

What a shock

And surge among the roofs.

[*With a crash the ceiling falls in over the POPE.*]

O God !

What is it ? What has happened ?

Is he dead ?

POTO.

Oh, oh, oh ! The Pope is dead.

CARDINAL PALLAVICINI.

The Pope

Is dead, is dead.

[*They rush out to the GUARD—a cry down the galleries*
“ *The Pope is dead !* ”]

POTO.

[*Re-entering.*] What horror !His Blessèdness, where is he ? Jammed behind
Those ribs of vaulting—but the throne still stands,
Veiled by a dais-curtain.*Re-enter the LORD CARDINAL ANTONIOTTO PALLAVICINI and*
the PAPAL GUARD. The vesper bell begins to ring.

O my lord, look there !

[*They discover the POPE.*]

CARDINAL PALLAVICINI.

Ah, God on earth, he keeps his throne ! Not dead ;
See, see, he moves the ruin from his hands.

POTO.

His brow bleeds. . . . [*to Guard.*] Gently, the great dais-nails
Will harrow up his arm.

CARDINAL PALLAVICINI.

But he is still as death !

Now pass him through the crevice the dropped vaultings
A-tilt have made.[*They bring the POPE out and raise him slowly on his feet.*]

ALEXANDER.

Yes . . . to my room,
[*He is helped into the next chamber.*]

CARDINAL PALLAVICINI.

Thank God !

Enter DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA.

CESARE.

My father . . .
The Lord Lorenzo Chigi is stone-dead
Above. . . . My father !

CARDINAL PALLAVICINI.

Excellency, safe ;
But hurt, but bleeding.

CESARE.

Publish wide the news ;
Shout his escape ! Send doctors, send the best—
The Bishop of Venosa.

[Exit into the POPE's chamber.

[CARDINAL PALLAVICINI *goes out*, as CARDINALS and
PHYSICIANS *pass in*.

After a while DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ARAGON *enters and*
stands waiting till some one passes out of the bed-chamber.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

[*Passing out.*] Your Excellency, the Pope's Holiness
Has at the very edge of death been spared.

LUCREZIA.

I am so thankful ! [*Physicians come out.*]

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

Nothing of danger ! He is torn, he is shaken.
He asked for you.

LUCREZIA.

I will go straight.

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

No, no, Madonna,
 He is asleep, and even your steps would rouse him !
 He will demand you later as his nurse,
 His cook, his smiling comfort. God be thanked !
[They pass out.]

LUCREZIA.

I am so thankful . . .
 That chasm—the marbles in their deadly blocks,
 I feel them as their falling were on me.
 Cesare ! *[He comes out of the chamber.]*

CESARE.

Pearl, how white !

LUCREZIA.

But you are whiter far. You are not hurt ?
 Cesare, are you reeling ? Take my hand.

CESARE.

Nothing—a chasm. . . . As from the pit of hell,
 When I look up through this destruction, up !
 I will not look. It is all over now ;
 That snatch of Chaos is an empty mouth.
 The tower fell—four were killed above this room ;
 No matter there, nor who. . . . But have you thought,
 Lucrezia, how brief our dazzled hours ?
 This tower a'crumble, had it buried him,
 Instead of bruising ! Diva, we are gods,
 But all Olympus perishes with Jove,
 And Jove we know must perish. Come away !
 I will conduct you.

LUCREZIA.

No, no, Cesare.
 There will be need to swiftly publish forth
 A Brief to calm the people from their fear.

CESARE.

Lucrezia, but you lay
 The cool of softest snow to my hot brain.
 Our Queen of Beauty love you !

LUCREZIA.

Take some wine—

The light, white wine. . . . To-morrow we shall laugh
At this big rent.

CESARE.

Avernus, we shall laugh!

[*They go out, the wind blowing on them from the gap.*]

SCENE II

The Vatican—a Loggia. DON ALFONSO and DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ARAGON are seated together. There are peaches on a golden dish by them, a golden wine-jug and goblet. Two quails and a peacock sun themselves on the ground. A monkey plays with the ribbons of the DUCHESS'S dress; she wears white, with a green and gold veil twisted in her long hair.

LUCREZIA.

Why do you sigh?

ALFONSO.

You are so full of bliss—

You contemplate me as I were a jewel.

LUCREZIA.

You are, and mine.

ALFONSO.

Why, you have many jewels.

LUCREZIA.

The gift of others: but this jewelled thing

Is you. Alfonso!—and the painters say

You are the loveliest boy in Italy.

You sigh again—why do you sigh? You shall not.

[*She caresses him and offers him half of a peach.*]

ALFONSO.

Ay, half—

Half of a pleasure! I would have you all,

And always. If I am to stay in Rome

Is it to shun your brother up and down
 The streets of Rome, so to escape temptation ?
 Even yesterday . . . Lucrece, he concentrates
 Such fury in me as I look on him
 I shiver, and for hours, after long hours
 I find myself still trembling.

LUCREZIA.

[*With deep acquiescence.*] Yes. . . .

ALFONSO.

And you can suffer
 That I should bear the insult of his carriage ;
 That is the wound : no flashing from your lips,
 When I am injured, and no least regret
 When you are summoned from me to confer
 With His Holiness apart, or by his side
 Parry the orators when they grow angry,
 And growl from their chafed monarchs.
 If to please you
 I stay in Rome . . .

LUCREZIA.

[*Laying her hands firmly over his.*] You are too young,
 impatient,
 To bear long audience of the orators.
 [*Twining her arm in his.*] But come—why will you speak
 of yesterday
 Or of to-morrow ? It is midsummer :
 Lucrezia is your own, Lucrezia
 So blissful in your arms that, malcontent,
 You sigh.

ALFONSO.

I would you loved me less, I would
 You did not hold me here as in your clutches.
 Midsummer ! I shall never see my own :
 I have seen you. Beauty, you have no season,
 Nor warmth, I think ; you are a cruel goddess,
 That loves her mortal, and can let him die,
 Her fit of doting ended.

LUCREZIA.

Will you quarrel ?

[*The POPE's voice is heard calling through the halls.*]

ALEXANDER.

Where is she?

Lucrezia, Lucrezia! My little nurse!

Lucrezia!

[*He enters.*]

LUCREZIA.

[*Rising with ALFONSO.*] We are here, dear father.

ALEXANDER.

Ha!

Feast of S. John, is this austerity?

Skinning cool peaches in a vestibule?

You should have seen the bull-fight, my fair Spaniard.

Cesare. . . .

But he is Hercules! There, in his doublet,

With his short sword he faced five bulls.

I watched

The issue, not the contest; for . . . conceive!—

Five spurting carcasses, the animals

So swiftly struck one could not draw one's breath

Between the passes. But the beasts were slain

Before his presence as in sacrifice!

The bloody smoke rose up as to a god.

Ah, little Spaniard, and you kept the hour

Toying with Naples.

[*He gives a chuckling whistle.*] An arena, child—

Above a reeking tiger there was silence

When Commodus, the golden-haired, stood up;

But when our Spada smote, and at one blow down tumbled

A huge, protesting head, the multitude

Lifted a crowd of shouts into the sky,

And saw no more; hearing was everywhere.

Then, as the noise grew thinner, he emerged

In beauty . . . oh, an athlete! oh, a David!

ALFONSO.

You must record this as a miracle.

Does it belong, your Blessèdness,

To Pagan legend or the Church?

LUCREZIA.

To us.

But I repent I did not see him there,

Magnificent before all Rome.

ALEXANDER.

You sparkle !

I pardon you. He scarcely will.

[The POPE nods his head and rises to go.]

LUCREZIA.

[Detaining him.] A peach ! . . .

It is a little fountain

That grottoes under cloud of this red skin.

There, father, from my hand.

[The POPE seats himself again.]

And this dear Cesare,

You will no more reproach him,

When he grows dull and drowse in the sun :

We let our lions drowse.

ALEXANDER.

[Eating the fruit.] Delicious !

So cordial in its essence it revives,

But sets the senses light enough to slumber.

We let our lions drowse . . .

I am drowsing now ;

A midsummer sweet napping. Guard my rest,

Bright angels !

Nay, Alfonso, do not budge.

I shall be fast asleep.

[The POPE falls asleep ; at intervals he snores.]

LUCREZIA.

[To ALFONSO.] Dear Blessèdness,

How could you flee from him ? Look, there is kindness

In every crease of his face ; look at his lips

That almost bubble in his sleep with mirth

And comfort that he takes in every pleasure.

He never could make sorrowful, Alfonso.

ALFONSO.

I did not flee from him,

LUCREZIA.

But you make sorrow,

Alfonso, with your fears. You are growing restless,

Restless again.

On this midsummer-day
When even the little demons of the wood
Are turned delighted into lovers' elves,
When all things take enchantment, even sin,
And pardon waits if one should sin too deep
[*Pointing to the POPE.*] Of Heaven itself, shall we not be
content?
Shall we not cease from talking?

ALFONSO.

[*Vehemently drawing her to his breast.*] While he sleeps.

SCENE III

An apartment next to the Borgia Tower, which is reached by a passage on which the door gives. DON MICHELOTTO CORELLA stands in the centre, the door being open. Suddenly DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA comes to him in a blaze of passion.

CESARE.

Eigh, Michelotto, shall a vermin kill?
Conceive! Alfonso flicked me with an arrow,
Shot from the chamber where Lucrezia watches.

MICHELOTTO.

The Duchess did not see?

CESARE.

It makes no matter,
It is of no account. . . . Swift, Michelotto,
A rope. . . . Conceive! This little pipe of breath,
This spawn, this Naples sought the overthrow
Of my large destinies . . . and his kind Duchess
Simmers the pipkin that he may not die
Of poisoned food! Not even the sharp vendetta
Of the Sanseverini fallen upon him
A month ago has mangled him to death;

He keeps his tower, mending his wounds apace.
 But, swish!—an arrow flies to end me. . . . Ecco!
 She is hard by, the silky wife grown fulsome,
 Dragged on a husband's chain. Swift, Michelotto, swift!

MICHELOTTO.

The poignard or the little rope? I serve you
 Close as my bone to flesh.

CESARE.

So God in silence
 Contracts with San Michele. Die for me——
 You were not such a fool! I choose who dies.
 Fetch me your instruments—the steel, the rope.
 Quick, and return! [Exit MICHELOTTO.]

I wait a thousand years!

Aha, Carlotta, little Sancia too!
 Ay, and Lucrezia . . . she can watch so much,
 I doubt not she was watching when he shot:
 She would not warn me—she has seen so much,
 And never stirred in tongue or eye. . . . But listen!
[He bends his ear toward the door.]

I hear the cooing voice; she sings to him.

[LUCREZIA'S voice is heard from the Borgia Tower.]

Sweetest Mother,
 Thy suit is won:
 Flowers for thee,
 Flowers for thy Son,
 Flowers at thy knee
 For the Trinity!

She is soothing him with little, airy notes,
 Like the rustle of the leaves.

[Re-enter MICHELOTTO. CESARE opens his hands for the
dagger and cord.

O Michelotto,

These jewels
 Have never shone so bright—steel, steel, and necklets
 Twisted and coiled so deftly round the throat
 The breath heaves up—then plumb back to its void.
 Conceal yourself. . . . I drag the women out. . . .

MICHELOTTO.

My lord, I cannot warrant
 Some little noise may lucklessly escape.

CESARE.

Myself I will be present if you palter,
Will watch his features crying for the air.
Swift, swift——

[*He goes into the Borgia Tower.*]

MICHELOTTO.

His fangs drip blood !

But she shall not suspect.

To the dark with me.

[*He thrusts the door wide open into the passage and hides behind it.*]

DUKE CESARE *re-enters*, his right arm round DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ARAGON, while his left hand grips DONNA SANCIA BORGIA, Princess of Squillace. The door is fastened behind them by MICHELOTTO.

SANCIA.

Loose, loose ! It bites my wrist.

Why do you bring us here ?

LUCREZIA.

You said that we must come.

SANCIA.

Let loose ; loose, Cesare !

CESARE.

[*To LUCREZIA.*] Sit there. . . .

[*To SANCIA.*] You writhing viper.

I fling you off !

[*He pushes her away. She is at the door, trying the handle.*]

LUCREZIA.

What is it ?

CESARE.

What ?—White eyes, who shot the arrow ?

LUCREZIA.

Alfonso——

CESARE.

In your sight !

LUCREZIA.

[*Stroking him.*] Your brow, your cheeks, your hands.
No blood. . . . Alfonso—

CESARE.

Do you plead for him?

LUCREZIA.

You are safe. . . .

CESARE.

You sang to him. Is that your triumph?

LUCREZIA.

' That you were safe. . . .
The little song. . . . I sang it to myself.
I sang. . . .

[*A cry is heard.*]

CESARE.

Fool Michelotto!

SANCIA.

[*Breaking from the door, and crying to* LUCREZIA.

Can you not hear? Do you not understand?
Are you of flesh or stone? They are killing him,
As they killed Giovanni. . . .

[*To CESARE.*] Murderer! For I know,
Ah, now I know you are his murderer.
You did the deed—you, you!
She can forgive a brother's death: I cannot!
I am blood of Naples, and will be avenged.

LUCREZIA.

Alfonso!

[*She sits motionless.*]

SANCIA.

Ay, Alfonso! He is murdered.
I will be heard! [*She beats on the door.*
Lucrece, Lucrece! She could divorce one husband:
Oh, she can sever! . . . Cold as death her eyes
Beat on me. O Lucrezia, do you hear? [*She mutters.*
They are murdering my brother—he is murdered.
Now all is gone to silence. . . . [*She sinks down in her sobs.*

CESARE.

[To LUCREZIA.] Star, you fade!

[LUCREZIA, who has been looking up into CESARE's face, falls into a swoon.]

DONNA ANGELA BORGIA and DONNA CATILENA DE VALENCE
*rush in, pressing the bolt aside : there is blood on the skirt
 of one of them. Awed by CESARE's aspect, they remain
 without speaking. SANCIA springs through the open door
 with a cry.*

[CESARE sways LUCREZIA toward the MAIDS OF HONOUR.
 There, take her, Angela—she clings. . . .]

LUCREZIA.

[Coming to herself and looking round.] Alfonso?

CESARE.

Cesar . . . but weep your tears, your destined tears.
 [He goes toward the door.]

LUCREZIA.

[Moving from ANGELA and following CESARE, with a cry.
 Alfonso !]

ANGELA.

Has she lost her wits?

CESARE.

[Arrested.] How wondrous
 She is ! And she is waiting for a ghost !

LUCREZIA.

[With the same cry.] Alfonso !

[He turns away as she almost touches him and quickly
 leaves her.]

ANGELA.

[With a gesture after CESARE.] Gone ! . . .
 Look at her, look ! She rises like a nymph
 In a cloud of water—look !

CATILENA.

She is parted from us. . . .

LUCREZIA.

[*Suddenly falling from her height full length on the ground.*
Jesu miserere !

SCENE IV

*The Stanze, DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA'S
new apartments in the Vatican.*

*The LORD ALEXANDER VI. has penetrated into them and looks
round.*

ALEXANDER.

At last I have lodged him in the Vatican ! But this is
pleasure ! . . . There is perfume in the rooms—the first
scent of jasmine ? No, but his balls of perfume ranged
already in their order. . . .

[*Laughing as a two-year-old child crawls up to him from a
tapestry.*

Ah, ah, and the babe too !—Giovanni ! . . . So
I named him, so, to speak once more the name.

[*The child reaches up to him.*

Blue eyes ! Come, come, no tears !
Angel, I cannot be your nurse, I cannot.

[*He passes on, slipping a rosary into the child's lap.*

How he inhabits
The air he breathes . . . no need of clothing here,
Embellishments and laces—all is Cesare,
His lusts, his pride, his loneliness. . . .

[*The POPE sits down and sighs twice or thrice heavily,
drumming with his fingers on the table : then he catches
sight of a design for CESARE'S new scutcheon. He
speaks in gasps.*

Aut Cesar—fie ! Aut nihil ! He is Cesar ;
Duke of Romagna first,
My bastard !—presently
King of all Italy. Am I, indeed, his father ?
But if I am not, Roman Jupiter
Stole to my couch and got him such a son
As the whole earth acclaims. More beautiful
He is growing day by day. We interact ;
We are together, or, if separate—

He breeding armies and I breeding gold—
 What colloquy at nightfall. . . . And submissive,
 He is submissive toward me as Lucrece.
 What children these have been to me !

Enter DONNA FIAMMETTA : she is a tall, perfectly fair young creature, of great dignity. She kneels.

Ah, Fiammetta, welcome!
 Nay, 'tis your right, child. . . . Here I am intruder,
 In the Lord Cesar's absence. Take my blessing.

FIAMMETTA.

[*As she rises.*] Lord Cesare bade me this hour . . .
 [*The CHILD cries. FIAMMETTA, looking for consent to the POPE, lifts the little Prince in her arms.*]

ALEXANDER.

It is

The hour for worship. With discretion, child,
 You soon will be the mistress of a king.

[*FIAMMETTA winces.*] Madonna !
 How like, how like ! You are good. Why should you blush ?
 You are good and honest . . . and a strength of heart
 Is in you to bear princes. You will suckle
 One day a playmate for this royal child,
 Infans Romanus !

FIAMMETTA.

[*Looking round in terror.*] The Lord Cesare
 Bade me attend . . .

ALEXANDER.

Scared at the Vatican,
 Seat of the gods, sweet child, and seat of Him
 Whose first command is Multiply ! These chambers
 Are given to my son. But all these motley walls
 We will have re-created—fading frescoes,
 Of hands that moulder . . . We will have your Cesar—
 Nay, we will have yourself set on a throne,
 Or rising 'mid the lilies . . . not historic :
 In history there is no art ; and life
 Is life and death, and never resurrection.
 My fair Fiammetta, we will have you painted.
 There is a prayer in your bright eyes—

FIAMMETTA.

Lord Cesare . . .

And represented as King Solomon.

ALEXANDER.

[*Patting her on the back.*] Assuredly . . . while David rests with God.

[*The POPE continues rubbing the frescoes with his hands.*

All new—

I will make all things new.

CESARE *enters hurriedly and is already some distance in the room, when he sees the POPE, FIAMMETTA and the CHILD. He stops dead, and remains immovable. Under his eyes FIAMMETTA puts the CHILD down and goes out. The CHILD watches the POPE and CESARE round-eyed, then creeps to the curtains and plays with the heavy tassels. The POPE stands, with wrinkled forehead, uneasy.*

CESARE.

[*With a wide smile.*] You know that Prince Alfonso has been killed?

ALEXANDER.

[*Trembling.*] Killed?

The boy was up and dressed, and felt his feet
For the first time to-day. . . . Why do you stand there
So overwhelming in your aspect, lofty
As you had won a fortress? On my soul,
And by the Holy Fisherman I swear,
You frighten me. . . . And I regret the lad—
A pretty, flaunting flower of pomegranate
Jerked from the bough. . . .

[*CESARE remains immovable, muttering oaths between his teeth.*

But we must cloak this death.

[*Laying his hand on CESARE.*] I will not listen; it is policy
In most things to be ignorant. . . . You, Cesare,
Must have the ordering of the funeral.
Poor lad! A restless creature, like a dog
That strays about your hearth, and may be here
To-morrow or be gone—Satan that wanders
The earth alone knows where . . . But murdered!
I think I will not know; my ears refuse

All knowledge from you . . . We must cloak this death
Among ourselves.

[*The POPE turns away tottering.*]

CESARE.

We cannot :
For his physicians said he would not die,
But live, as pertinacious as a weed.
It cannot and it shall not be a secret
Why he was killed.

ALEXANDER.

[*Turning sharply back on CESARE.*] By whom ?

CESARE.

By me.

[*ALEXANDER covers his face. A strange sound, half-moan, half-sob, breaks from him. There is long silence ; then the POPE looks at CESARE with a pale, aged face.*]

ALEXANDER.

The boy

Was young and fair ; but scarcely crossed your path.

CESARE.

His stealthy arrow did ; he let it whizz
Across the garden as I trod the grass.
Such little splits of wood may in a moment
End years of ripening fame. A month ago
The hurried marble thundered down on you,
To-day an arrow swept my hair. Say, Holiness,
Would you prefer to have that lad of Naples
Teasing your moments with his fears and murmurs
Or me shot dead, our dead dreams under me ?

ALEXANDER.

My tawny Splendour, wherefore ask ?

CESARE.

[*Spreading his palms.*] Then wherefore ?

ALEXANDER.

Cesare, the avowal !

CESARE.

I killed in self-defence ?

ALEXANDER.

Son, that you killed. . . .

Well, it is done !

Well, it is done !

CESARE.

And if your Holiness
Will deign to listen—do not let the tongue
Be running and returning like a wheel :
All gossip of my action,
If you refrain, will end within his grave.
Unless you speak there cannot be an echo.

ALEXANDER.

Ay, ay—die out—the gossip will die out ;
Ay, ay, if you would have it so . . .
The vaults ? For we must bury him in private.

CESARE.

[*As he nods.*] Without bell-ringing and a storm of dirges.

ALEXANDER.

Lucrece !
Ah, she will weep her eyes out : rain, rain, rain,
Above this broken flower, this bridegroom.

CESARE.

Banish her.

ALEXANDER.

I could not bear to see a lifelessness
Of sorrow in the dear one.

CESARE.

Banish her.

Unless you banish her,
The Vatican nor any street in Rome
Will see me.

ALEXANDER.

She shall spend her tears at Nepi,
 At Nepi—my own gift to her—no exile !
 She shall retire where she is Governor,
 Attended and in honour. La, sweet child !
 The iris-sprinkled side-locks, amber sheaves,
 A widow's ! She, a dove of desert-waters,
 A widow !

CESARE.

Let her keep
 Her dule 'mid dead volcanoes !
*[He catches up the child, tosses it, and tumbles it on a
 couch against a large piombo cat.]*

ALEXANDER.

[As if watching.] . . . Figliuolo,
 Luck is your Guardian Angel ! Have you thought
 Romagna needs protection against Venice,
 Romagna that so soon will be your own ?
 The Estes of Ferrara . . . could we mate
 Lucrezia with the princely house ! Ah, then, to northward
 You were impregnable. The heir is named
 Alfonso. . . . To a woman there is matter
 Of comfort in a name. For poor Alfonso—
 God rest his soul !—who now is lying dead,
 Alfonso d'Este shall be sought for her.

CESARE.

[Abruptly leaving his game with the child and animal.]
 Has Lord Gianstefano Ferreri yet
 Paid down the sum due for his Cardinalate ?
 I want the money.

ALEXANDER.

[In a murmur.] Such a tiger-clutch
 Upon our treasures ! *Fio di putta,*
Bastardo ! . . . More, more, more,
 As I made gold for Mommus !

CESARE.

Can I
 Found you a power in your estates and cities

Without the wages of my soldiers ? Sooner
 I would pawn my Indian rubies
 And ceremonial pearls than let my army
 Starve for its hire. Ten thousand ducats—

ALEXANDER.

[*Passing his hand across his brow.*] I am coining day and
 night and in my dreams :
 I cannot. . . . I am bare
 Of treasure, save these vestments that the Church
 Casts on my poverty. I have no jewels,
 No raiment, no reserve. . . . But Cardinal Lopez
 Is fading every day.

CESARE.

I cannot wait.

ALEXANDER.

Pish ! You shall have the wages. But last evening
 You plained you needed more artillery,
 And Messer Leonardo would be idle
 Among the forts unless I furnished you—
 Fate will : for Lopez dies.

These busy Cardinals
 Build each a piece of honeycomb in mass
 Sufficient. . . . Why, Michele, Giambattista
 Orsini, and Ferrari
 Have sweet within their cells for all Romagna.
 Ah, we shall need
 More than the harvest of the Jubilee,
 A tithe, a fresh Crusade. . . . What else ?

CESARE.

[*In a vibrating voice.*] The King of France
 Sanctions my new campaign. I kissed his envoy,
 Lifting my mask off—father.

ALEXANDER.

He grants you freedom, will molest no more ?
 My policy of months confirmed !

CESARE.

And seldom

Has France been so outwitted. Now you are laughing ?
 I curse them, to the very lees of laughter,
 These dung-hill French, that I must fight beside.
 —Ah, now your eye is caught by the escutcheon,
 Our challenge !

ALEXANDER.

[*Shaking his head.*] Flagrant blazoning ! Christ Jesus !
 Yet if you are not Cesar—*nihil, nihil !*
 Come with me to the treasury.

CESARE.

And silence,
 Silence and secrecy about this death.

ALEXANDER.

[*Making a step back, as if from a gulf.*] Cesare, but you
 sway me like your mother,
 When she inhabited my will. Ah, God !
 My Captain and my Gonfalonier
 Suppling my nature like a mistress, fah !
 Come with me. . . . Take the gold !

SCENE V.

SUOR LUCIA *in a cave beneath the heights of Nepi. She is
 dressed as a penitent : before her is a crucifix.*

SUOR LUCIA.

I would that I had kept it in my heart,
 Even as that other secret. Christ's dear wounds
 Printed on me ! And now the multitude
 Would see the trace and crowd up to my cavern,
 I do not want the impress any more :
 I do not want the crowd,
 Nor anything to happen any more.

[DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ARAGON *enters and bows
 low before her. She rises and makes salutation.*

Most noble princess,
 pray you, by your sorrows, let me be.
 I have no signs to show you.

LUCREZIA.

Let me lay
 My hands against your hands.

SUOR LUCIA.

[*Astonished.*] Then you believe?

LUCREZIA.

And you will pray for me?

SUOR LUCIA.

The stigmata—
 Would you receive them?

LUCREZIA.

I am with the lost.
 Give me these hands,
 And let me stroke them up and down.

This land
 Of the Dies Irae, O this bitter land!
 The hills
 Heavy with crusted blood, the streams that hiss
 So low, as if from pits of hell—this land!

SUOR LUCIA.

[*Slowly watching her.*] You would win pardon? Do not be
 afraid. . . .
 The Lord was there;
 In purple and in darkness.

LUCREZIA.

Oh, I would feel the wounds!
 [*As kneeling, LUCREZIA rests her head against SUOR
 LUCIA, a profound peace settles on her, and she falls
 asleep.*]

SUOR LUCIA.

But this is perfect faith, a miracle.
 My hands are coarse and hard and only striped

Where I have touched the oxen's leather thongs.
 She does not ask for any history,
 Or trouble me to hope.

[LUCREZIA opens her eyes and smiles.
 You smile : you have had dreams ?

LUCREZIA.

[*Rising.*] No : I have rested, I have been asleep.
 I am governor

Of this dear Nepi. Where you have found peace,
 None shall disturb you ; none shall take away
 This peace, or question. I am Governor.

[*She embraces SUOR LUCIA, and, still smiling, passes out.*

SCENE VI

A room in the Castle of Nepi.

In front is a fireplace, flanked by two chests bearing the monograms of DON ALFONSO and DONNA LUCREZIA. To the right is a narrow window beaten with rain. To the left, in a dark corner of the apartment, DONNA LUCREZIA'S Secretary MESSER CRISTOFERO stands by his desk before a pile of papers and documents. DON FEDERICO ALTIERI, a young Roman gentleman of the PRINCESS'S escort, leans against the desk.

DON FEDERICO.

But speak of her,
 But give me leave to speak—perplexity
 Is on us of her escort : we were bid
 Accompany her as she were led to prison ;
 And in this Nepi that is hers we know
 She is a captive—we would rescue her ;
 She is a victim—we would slay the tyrant.
 Oh, she is like a girl, a younger sister,
 Still shut up with her tutors, whose fair face
 Climbs from a narrow casement, and spreads torture,
 Cursing and disbelief through idle time.
 What dwells within those plaits of saffron hair ?
 Speak, secretary, for all our patience ends.

CRISTOFERO.

It must not. Hers will never end. Her passions
Lie in a bed of patience.

DON FEDERICO.

In a sea
That overwhelms them !

CRISTOFERO.

No, in a bed of patience ;
And there she fosters them. She will not die.

DON FEDERICO.

Will she be wed again, again revive
As the seasons alternate from cold to hot,
With a great patience till the years be spent ?

CRISTOFERO.

Don Federico, she will never wed
Save as her father's policy decrees ;
She is a sainted daughter.

DON FEDERICO.

And a sister—
How would you rate her there ?

CRISTOFERO.

It is the Duke himself
That banished her : he could not tolerate
The tears he caused to flow. If you would serve her,
Let those in Rome about His Holiness
Be taught she languishes for Rome ; effect
Her swift recall. I will provide you taste
Sweetness of her sweet gratitude. I have served her
Through many bitter days and found her sweetness
As the perfume of her patience.

Enter DONNA LUCREZIA.

She approaches.
My orders are most strict : you must retire.

DON FEDERICO.

[*After a profound obeisance.*] But in the name of your whole
escort, sovereign,
If we can aid——

[LUCREZIA *looks down on him and remains dumb.*

CRISTOFERO.

[*To DON FEDERICO.*] Receive our sovereign's thanks.

[*Exit DON FEDERICO.*

LUCREZIA.

There are so many letters,
So many letters that I cannot write.
My poor Cristofero,
We meet this way together every morning ;
I cannot write ; I cannot sign my name.
It startles me to see my name. . . .
Put by your papers.

[CRISTOFERO *lays manuscripts into drawers.*

But there is an action :

Write to the Cardinal San Severini
That he may have new prayers, new prayers—all day
Said in the monasteries on account
Of the great sorrow I have had to bear.

[*Laying her hand on CRISTOFERO.*

Provide that Vincent take
The gold I gave him to the Cardinal,
That a great requiem be solemnised
For the Prince Duke my husband—for his soul.
The glory of the saints play over him
And mingle him among them in their bliss !
I cannot bear my shadowy court of folk
That make no feast, that speak in low-toned voices,
And yet are raising up no prayers to Heaven
To draw down peace on him. There must be peace ;
And I must lay my sorrow down to rest
Soft and for ever as I laid my dead.

[CRISTOFERO *begins to write* ; LUCREZIA *looks from the window.*

There is no truth
In staying here, in all this haggard country,
With all its miles on miles of withering turf.
Must I be sovereign of this sultry air,

This land that gapes on me ? And there are chasms,
Great fissures that affright. . . . Of the miasma too
My babe may die. Are there no posts from Rome ?

CRISTOFERO.

None, Excellency—yet I would convey
News of your health, of the young Prince's health,
If it should please you, to his Holiness.

LUCREZIA.

Nay, we must not be forward. Posts will come
To Nepi, if at Nepi I abide. . . .

Enter DONNA HIERONYMA BORGIA with little DON RODRIGO.
DONNA LUCREZIA runs to her.

Give me the child.

HIERONYMA.

Fie, he will set you weeping !

LUCREZIA.

[*Throwing back her widow's veil.* While he smiles ? Bambino,
How thou wilt charm thy grand-dad.

Up and down,
Then up again—ha, ha !

HIERONYMA.

The child is growing.

LUCREZIA.

Is it possible to grow—away from Rome ?

[*She sets RODRIGO on a table before her.*
Hieronyma, see the small, beating feet !
This babe will dance before he learn to walk.

HIERONYMA.

His mother's babe !

LUCREZIA.

Roble, we must to Rome !
'Tis there one dances.

HIERONYMA.

Gently, kinswoman,

The child is here in safety.

LUCREZIA.

From what foe ? In safety ?

The child is mine. . . . He will protect the child.

[*Dancing* RODRIGO.] Pat, pat—bare toes !

Cristofero, your Prince

Is clad as quaintly as a traveller

In haste, and seeking refuge. Write to Vincent

That he send quickly stuffs and broideries ;

Write for the little coat,

Punctured with gold, I wrought him.

HIERONYMA.

Not the gold one ;

Our Prince wears mourning.

A SERVANT *enters* : *he confers apart with CRISTOFERO and goes out.*

LUCREZIA.

Babe, what we must wear !

But I shall make your garments, one by one,

Even till you grow a man.

He snatches pearls !

I love their slide about my throat—nay, Roble,

Their touch is silkier than a baby's thumb.

Fie, little cricket !

CRISTOFERO.

Donna !—

LUCREZIA.

[*Turning.*] Posts from Rome ?

You have tidings ?

CRISTOFERO.

No, Madonna. . . .

LUCREZIA.

Say !

CRISTOFERO.

Duke Valentino
Is here, is at the doors.

LUCREZIA.

I have not seen. . .

CRISTOFERO.

None ever sees, Madonna : from the ground
His army springs.

LUCREZIA.

[*Standing quietly and wringing her hands.*
And his commands?

CRISTOFERO.

To bid farewell.

Madonna, he is busy,
His one thought of his conquests. But an instant,
Give him an instant's audience and God speed.

LUCREZIA.

Where is he ?

CRISTOFERO.

In soft converse with Capello.

LUCREZIA.

And whither—?

CRISTOFERO.

Sweet mistress, ask him whither ; that will make
Matter of speech between you. Ask him whither.

LUCREZIA.

I cannot see him ! If he come, he comes
As the thunder that one cannot bear, or as
The earthquake that one suffers.

CRISTOFERO.

He was most tender

You should not be disturbed.

[*HIERONYMA is taking the sleepy child away ; LUCREZIA
motions it is to remain.*

The Duke must march

Within an hour. . . .

LUCREZIA.

[*To HIERONYMA.*] But I will mind the child.

[*CRISTOFERO goes out; HIERONYMA draws back; LUCREZIA lays RODRIGO to sleep on a cushion and remains by him.*

Enter DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA. He is dressed in black, rain-streaked velvet, and a coat of fine mail; his belt and sword are gold; from the black beretta in his hand a white, rain-drenched feather sweeps to the ground. He is followed by DON MICHELOTTO CORELLA, MONSIGNORE GASPARE TORELLA, MESSER AGAPITO DE AMALIA and the CAVALIERE VINCENZO CALMETA.

CESARE.

Your benediction
Upon our arms and our diplomacy!

[*LUCREZIA lifts her eyes and salutes his CAPTAINS and trains.*

We start for Pesaro. None in the army
Has learnt that secret. We are here in conclave.
I go to conquer Pesaro. Giovanni
De Sforza has made havoc of your fame—
In tongue and hand
He shall be rendered impotent.

[*Drawing closer.*] For you
I fight, Lucrezia: you burned so hot
For vengeance of that enemy. I marked
The rage enkindled in your very substance,
As it must be when women are traduced.
Lucrece, I am no more a Cardinal;
I am a soldier with an army, such
As princes covet, and my first assault
Will be on Pesaro.

Are you a corpse,
A sentinel beside the child? You stand
So solid and so simple, like a block
Of marble that is dragged into a room
Long as its beauty pleases, and dragged forth,
If it can take no lustre from our moods.

LUCREZIA.

[*Moving a little forward.*] There is my lord Torella, always faithful ;

Agapito, who loves you—I commend

The Duke to you, to you . . .

[*Turning back.*]

The child awakens !

[*CESARE lifts RODRIGO, who resists.*

He will not . . . but he must.

[*She shudders as CESARE kisses the child and gives it to her.*

. . . At Pesaro

You will find my lute ; I remember where I left it—

In the fourth chamber : you will find my books ;

Take care of them. Farewell . . .

CESARE.

A rivederla !

The lady here would haunt us. Will you fear,

Michelotto, you, a pacing ghost ?

You have laid many such !

[*To his cortege.*]

I led you here

That you might look on her, and Pesaro

Fall without aid of cannon. Ha, a fool !

[*He laughs and turns on his heel.*

LUCREZIA.

[*Looking after him wistfully and addressing CALMETA.*

Your lord may be a king—I have dreamed it thus—

I would your lord should be a king. . . .

Dear captains,

And soldiers, and the poet . . . give him glory.

CALMETA.

But we would fight for you.

LUCREZIA.

Then give him glory.

CESARE.

[*Half turning.*] I am ashamed a poet should behold you !
Cavaliere, she was in our thoughts
A statue of fair Victory, a winged

And silent creature that creates the air
She flees along. . . .

Turn from her, she will damp
The stoutest hearts—a weather to discourage
An army from the field !

[*Taking up a fold of LUCREZIA's veil.*] In widow's weeds—
For my assassin ! These are widow's weeds,
Are they not ? They displease me ; they deform.

LUCREZIA.

[*In a low, firm voice, while she trembles.*
They will remain upon me the full time ;
Their darkness on me my whole life till death.

CESARE.

Your future is irrelevant. Till death ?
But nothing matters then. [*Addressing his cortege.*
To Pesaro !

[*Turning again to LUCREZIA.*
You look a lady fit to nurse the wounds
Of men who fight for other women's love.

[*He coldly touches her hand—his followers bowing low
to her, move aside as he passes to the door : there he
steps back and surveys LUCREZIA, who is shaken with
agitation, then, smiling maliciously, he goes out.*

LUCREZIA.

Demon !

[*She weeps bitterly.*] . . . I am a toy
In hands that play their game of rivalry
Over the stream of death.

O child !

[*She crushes RODRIGO to her breast.*

SCENE VII

*The Hills of Romagna. Sheepfolds and Shepherds ; DUKE
CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA lying down in
the midst of them.*

SHEPHERD.

. . . . You are our shepherd
And ruler of our flocks : we are your flock.

CESARE.

You are my chosen warriors.

A CROWD OF SHEPHERDS.

We are your shepherds, we must stay at home :
We cannot leave our flocks.

CESARE.

You are Romagna,
You are my people.

OLD SHEPHERD.

We are his people : we are Italy.
He consecrates us too ; he loves the valleys
Where we rear up our lambs and sing our loves.

*[They all gather round as if longing for some outbreak
of their enthusiasm.]*

What shall we do ? Beat on our castanets,
Fall on our knees, bring tribute ? . . . But our prince
Has infinite treasure.

CESARE.

You shall keep my castles.
You are my garrisons ; while you defend them
I shall rest quiet, all Romagna mine. *[Rising.]*

THE FLUTE-BOY.

You will not go from us ?

CESARE.

First, I command a song.
*[He sits down again, expectant. The BOY sobs ; then,
fixing his eyes on the DUKE, pauses, and after a few
moments sings out shrilly.]*

THE FLUTE-BOY.

The great lord Cesar Julius
Crossed the Rubicon—
The army was great,
It passed in state :
And the host was gone.

There was none to see
 That mighty lord ;
 The light on his face,
 The light on his sword,
 —And the history.

But a child on the bank
 Of the Rubicon,
 On his knees he sank,
 He stooped and drank,
 For his heart was faint that his lord was gone.
[The Shepherds all weep.]

CESARE.

[Embracing the boy.] A master !—he shall sing you all I am.
 And now I pass to Rome, without farewell,
 For I am dwelling here and in your midst,
 And with you through all ages, in your music,
 Your sorrows, with the shadows on the hills,
 So close to you, a presence in your hearts.
 O my Romagna, there is no farewell ! *[Exit.]*

A SHEPHERD.

He has slipped away : I knew he was a god.
 Boy, are you stricken ? You should look up proudly.

THE BOY.

[Taking up his flute and looking after CESARE.]
 I am stricken to the heart ; he is a god.

ACT IV

SCENE I

The Vatican : a Loggia.

DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA d'ARAGON *is seated between her Maids of Honour, DONNA ANGELA BORGIA and DONNA CATILENA DE VALENCE, while her Maid CLARICE pours wine on her long hair.*

LUCREZIA.

My head aches.

CLARICE.

Soon her Excellence

Will feel relief.

ANGELA.

You look a wave-drenched siren
In those long folds of hair cloyed with the honey
By which the lees of the white wine cling close.
The sun is brilliant !

CATILENA.

And it was kindly done
To save us freckles by the grace of hats
Worn in the presence. Ah, sweet Pope,
Until his Holiness returns to-day
Venus is Sovereign of the Church, its princes
Her laughing hierophants, the Sacred College
Her Loves, her Doves, her Swallows, what you will,
All twittering of her till the air is crazy,
And every breeze a gossip.

LUCREZIA.

Hush !

A pretty jest—

But when it thundered yesterday I sobbed,
 And headache like a terror hung on me
 All the night long. . . . I am a daughter
 Guarding her father's house—the Universe :
 I am no Pope, and, though the Cardinals
 Laugh gallantly or slyly, though I laugh
 At all the salt and spice of travesty,
 Yet this obedience to my father's will
 Has turned my prayers to stone.

Dear girls,

Here at the toilet let me be a woman,
 Whose handmaid forehead the triregno's weight
 Burthens to faintness.

Clarice, did you bruise

The celandine and greater cleaver's madder
 The full time Messer Giambattista Porta
 Ordains ?

CLARICE.

Before you climbed up to the sun,
 The roots were bruised and mixed with cummin-oil,
 The boxwood slivers and the saffron, Donna.

LUCREZIA.

Then lay our compound on. . . .
 The Envoy from Ferrara cannot enter,
 Nor my two Cardinal Secretaries, until
 You draw my hair out through the crownless hat,
 And spread it like a halo on the brim.

[CLARICE *dyes her golden hair deeper.*]

ANGELA.

There is a whisper that the Duke was seen,
 Masked, at dead midnight. . . .

LUCREZIA.

[*Starting.*] He will keep his chamber ;
 He sleeps by day. I were ashamed
 To play to him the Pope of Christendom ;
 I could not play it—I should flow no laughter.

Haste, Clarice, haste, I am longing
For Messer Saracini and his news
Of when I shall be married.

Angela

How long, how long I wait !
A woman is a prisoner till a husband
Unlock her to her aim. When I am giddy
With dancing for my father, I recall
What Messer Saracini tells me often
Of the quiet, ordered court and the proud pomp
Of the old Este castle. . . . Don Alfonso,
So full of occupation with his cannon,
Artillery as brilliant as my brother's ;
But he himself in careless trim, as sons
Of an old princely house may dare to be.
Clarice, my tresses wide as sun-rays!
[*Her hair is spread over a frame.*] Bid
The Chamberlain bring Messer Saracini. [Exit CLARICE.]

ANGELA.

A tent of yellow silk ! I peep at you,
White, captive lady, Don Alfonso's bride.

LUCREZIA.

Hush, hush !

Enter MESSER SARACINI with CLARICE.

SARACINI.

Most humble greeting !
Duke Ercole informs your Excellence
This week the wedding-train forsakes Ferrara.

[*The MAIDS OF HONOUR clap their hands.*

[LUCREZIA *springs up, snatching the hat-brim from her hair, which streams round her in dripping gold, as she childishly dances in a giddy circle.*

[*She pauses breathless and laughing before MESSER SARACINI.*

LUCREZIA.

Ah, you bring joy !
And joy is in my feet as in the lyre-strings
The golden music.

Messer Saracini,

Is the great cortege for my capture started ?

Oh, caught in dancing as a mermaid, and

And carried to Ferrara ! Shortly

His Holiness will enter Rome, and shortly

The bells will clamour joy above our heads

Till the air dances, and the sunshine dances !

Girls, I will send my jester

Dressed in my newest clothes—the gold-scaled petticoat,

And crimson sleeves—to dance out to the people

My joy, and cry up *Viva la Duchessa*,

Viva il Papa ! Girls. . . .

[*To SARACINI.*] Oh, you are grave and full of wisdom's
smiling

Behind the gravity !

Clarice, my hat !

Tent me again for the Ambassador.

[*CLARICE spreads her hair once more over the frame.*

SARACINI.

Your future father, the Duke Ercole,

Sends me these pearls, his noble Duchess wore,

For Don Alfonso's bride—ancestral pearls,

Not lately sea-washed, held by sovereign fingers

While years made generations.

LUCREZIA.

[*Lifting them.*]

Golden pearls !

SARACINI.

Duke Ercole informs your Excellence

His health revives.

LUCREZIA.

By letter

Commend me to his Excellence your Duke ;

Say, she who is his daughter in her heart

Rejoices for his welfare. . . . I can nurse. . . .

[*To her MAIDS.*] Tell Messer Saracini—night and day,

Alone, without repose, I tended

His Holiness when injured by the falling

Of a wind-toppled tower.

To-night

Be present at my ball.

SARACINI.

Most flattered thanks.

ANGELA.

And I will dance with you.

SARACINI.

Day dance as well,
And bring me to that hour, sweet promiser ! [Exit.

ANGELA.

Ha, ha !—the limed, old bird ! Ha, ha !

Enter two CARDINALS with despatches.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

A post, from Spain.
His Catholic Majesty writes threateningly
Of the French rape of Naples, Holy Father
Assisted through the Duke.

LUCREZIA.

My lord,
His Holiness returns this afternoon ;
Await his wisdom.
[*Holding out her hair.*] See, is this a Pope ?

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Apollo !

LUCREZIA.

[*Smiling.*] Leave him to his spokes.
I will report you diligent, my lords.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Your blessing, Holy Father ! [*Laughing, she gives it.*

So the beam
Of heaven bears down a dove. [*Kissing her finger-tips.*

CARDINAL MICHELE.

Your blessing !

Christ heal me !

[*He lays his hand on his heart and goes out with* CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

LUCREZIA.

Clarice, I am almost dozing !
 This gold sun heaps me with such weight of gold.
 Leave me and lay out the white satin robe—
 No, for a warmth may rest upon my whiteness
 A little space : I dance to-night in black,
 With rubies of their violence grasping pearls,
 With these ancestral drops of my old duchy.
 Give me the verses on our Borgian Bull
 That Porcius wrote—that little book. My eyes
 Will rest on it half-closed and full of ease,
 As sunny cats that stretch themselves to dream.

[*They go out.*]

How strange !

I feel as I should never grow a woman
 Save at Ferrara, miles away from Rome.
 Alfonso does not love me—every day
 Humiliates my humbler race, is fearful
 I shall be found in nature sinister
 And fatal. . . . But I am not so, and therefore
 He cannot find that I am anything
 But just his young Lucrece, he soon will love,
 As creatures sent for gifts, if they are gentle,
 Are cherished in reception. . . . Oh !

A masked figure glides in behind and she suddenly hears a voice.

VOICE.

Amanda !

LUCREZIA.

[*To herself.*] Castelian ! . . . One, one voice. . . .

CESARE.

Amanda ?

LUCREZIA.

You,

Cesare ! You are come ?

CESARE.

I cannot see :
Is there a smile behind these rays or no ?
Is it dark weather, masks—or lip to lip ?

LUCREZIA.

Your voice . . . I lost my breath
To welcome you.

CESARE.

Then to black hell my mask !
[*He throws it away and kneels.*]

O Excellency of Ferrara, have I
Come here too late ? Do all the Cupids
Hold over this white, little face the saffron
Of Hymen's veil already ? But I dare
A kiss beneath this gold, although Alfonso
Lose one sweet, nuptial joy . . .

Ah, the beretta
Must off in blaze of noon, if I would reach
Beneath your brim. [*Holding her chin.*] Return my happiness !
[*They kiss.*]

What strands of amber ! O magnificence !
My blond is grey-ashamed to touch such yellow
Of crocus triumph. So it seems my sister
Will be a sovereign Duchess.

LUCREZIA.

Cesare,
This Este marriage—you would prosper it ?

CESARE.

My fortress !

Behind your towers Venice can rage and curse. . . .
But there is joy beyond—we shall be neighbour-princes,
Romagna in your sight as you look out,
And you in reach if I should mount a horse.
Rome will be left, but not the Duke, your brother,
We cannot be divided. . . . Holiness !

[*He laughs mockingly.*]

LUCREZIA.

You must not, Cesare. . . . Had you been home
The Holy Father had not set me up. . . .

It burns me ! *[She lifts her hands to her face.]*

CESARE.

Curse the folly !

To make a jest of you—our secret ! You

To be a Pope, a Governor—my secret

Of the veiled hours, of the sealed lips !

Our father can be garrulous in action

As well as tongue. Forget, forget, love-goddess,

All but the whelming sea-deep and your pearls !

[He lifts the great Este necklace from her knee.]

Cloud, cloud, be dumb, my moon—shine under cloud !

. . . Were letters sent from Spain ?

LUCREZIA.

I would not read them.

CESARE.

We will receive them presently and answer.

LUCREZIA.

I marvel

To see you up and in the morning sun.

CESARE.

I waked—then heard you sat against the sun,
Fixed to one spot in glory.

LUCREZIA.

And the wars ?

CESARE.

—Gained me Faënza, Castel-Bolognese,
Corneto, Piombino : for the French
I entered Capua. . . .

LUCREZIA.

And you were cruel there.

CESARE.

'Transcendently. Naples is crushed to earth,
Is gone, stamped French in bloodshed.

That vendetta

I look on, round and perfect—Naples,
That once eclipsed my moon and shot its arrow
Athwart my omen, Naples
Hurled down as throne and kingdom !

LUCREZIA.

Cesare ! My hand—
You grasp as if to break. . . . Your long, white hand !

CESARE.

It hurts ? Lucrece, I rule at Pesaro.

LUCREZIA.

Well, dear, you need not look so venomous.
You rule—where is it that you do not rule ?

[*The cannon of Sant' Angelo boom and the bells ring.*
LUCREZIA and CESARE lean over the parapet together ;
he gently pushes back the straw brim round her
forehead and kisses her many times ; then he quickly
descends.

SCENE II

The Vatican : Sala dei Pontifici.

A brilliant assembly. The POPE is enthroned : in front of him is a table on which is set a great jewel-case. To the left are the CARDINALS ; to the right DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA, in cloth of gold and pearls. Before the table DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ARAGON, in cloth of gold and pearls, a black ribbon confining her hair, receives the nuptial ring of DON ALFONSO D'ESTE from the hands of his brother the LORD CARDINAL IPPOLITO D'ESTE.

IPPOLITO.

With all his heart the illustrious Don Alfonso
Sends by my hand this ring.

LUCREZIA.

With all my heart

I take this ring.

[CARDINAL IPPOLITO *puts it on her finger.*]

ALEXANDER.

So now we are made an Este !

Donna Lucrezia Borgia d'Este, come,

The Church enfolds thee dearly.

[*He embraces her ; then she stands by him at her brother's side.*]

Lord Ippolito,

Open the nuptial gift, Duke Ercole's.

IPPOLITO.

Fair sister, white as moonlight for the stars,
 Would in this prison all the constellations,
 That dew the paths of heaven when Luna shines,
 Were clustered for your taking ! Fair,
 How you would set with twisted gold Orion,
 And all the planets from the rubious Mars
 To emerald-dartling Mercury. O Fair,
 We are not gods to homage our Elect,
 To wrench the sky and rob its flowering lights ;
 But all that mines and rocks can make eternal
 Of those pure rays that span mortality
 Are at your feet.

ALEXANDER.

My lord Ippolito,

Your words with admirable beauty heighten

The preciousness of this most precious gift.

[CARDINAL IPPOLITO *and the FERRARESE TREASURER*
open the coffer.]

Ha ! The lips suck, and even upon the palate
 These sparkles dance and twang. Oh, marvellous !
 Inert we call this body, yet it seeks
 The corners of the chamber as with song ;
 A voice strikes on our fibres. Cesare,
 These rubies. . . . You are poor !

Collars ! Who would not

Be captive to these links ?

[*Putting one on.*]

See, on the breast

This great rock-sapphire sullen !

Pearls—the pearls ! the pearls !

Soft—ah, but soft. I smile, as old Tithonus

At the rainbow-paps of Dawn. This ring, a woman's,

Can sit on my first joint to pipe its tale

Of shepherds in the showery grass. What joyance,

Heartiness as from cordial-glasses, drunk

By eyes and touch and spirit, in this treasure !

My lord, my lord !

You set resplendent eyes upon the Bride.

Ah, lord Ippolito ! Serenely

She gives their posts of beauty to these jewels ;

For her they strike and bleed, herself they honour,

For her they strike and bleed, herself they honour,

Their chief ally your gaze.

[*The PRINCES OF FERRARA and the CARDINALS make their presentations.*

Gifts, gifts—more gifts !

The Church, the World munificent.

[*LUCREZIA smiles and thanks the PRINCES and CARDINALS with deep inclinations.*

Burcardus,

Remove the magic table ; in its room

We too must weave our magic.

Bring the sweetmeats !

A shower of pleasant hail in these warm bosoms ;

Not golden rain of Jove, but feastful sugar. . . .

[*He throws confetti into the bodices of the ladies.* DONNA GIULIA FARNESE and some of the fairer among them pelt him back.

LUCREZIA.

[*Softly sucking a sweetmeat.*] My lord Ippolito, this crucifix,

And this, and this—your gifts . . . they will know my hand

Close as the nuptial ring.

IPPOLITO.

Fairest, and most devout !

ALEXANDER.

The floors are clear ; and I have my petition.

Cesare, grant us joy ! Dance with your sister.

My stars, my Gemini ! Lead forth the Duchess. . . .

Delay ? My prayer !

[CESARE bends close to LUCREZIA and whispers in her ear. She turns white, then rose-red, with her eyes on the ground.

My prayer !
[LUCREZIA lays her hand in CESARE'S.

CESARE.

[Laughing and bowing to the POPE.] The tambourines !
[They dance a slow Spanish dance : as they begin LUCREZIA lifts her eyes to CESARE'S face, and, looking into each other's eyes, they tread the measure.

ALEXANDER.

[Clapping and humming with delight.

More, more !
Could I but make these orbits everlasting,
God on the Earth had then His praise forever,
His music of the heavens. . . . My gold stars,
Each with its angel in a glory.

More !
[The dance goes on to music and hand-clapping.

SCENE III

The Vatican : Sala dei Pontifici.

*The LORD ALEXANDER and DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ESTE.
She is in a crimson travelling-dress, with hat and feather.*

ALEXANDER.

And now we part !

LUCREZIA.

Dear Holiness, my Father . . .

ALEXANDER.

Ah, Child—Lucrezia ! The pale eyes are rounding
To pearls, great precious pearls, that feed their orbs
Upon a sea of tears. . . . But you are young,
Scarce twenty-two, and, yonder in the north,

One half of you
 Is now already at your sovereign home.
 Listen, my little girl : be circumspect
 Among the Este, blameless to their watching :
 But with a gentle steadfastness of pride
 Meet and o'erthrow their arrogance . . . God keep you
 From cold disdain or cruelty !

LUCREZIA.

Father, my courage
 Is sure for I have won my husband's father :
 His brothers too, though nobly formal still,
 As fashion rules their manners, have kind faces,
 An air that makes me brave.
 You must not pine, dear father,
 Nor look for me too often, nor remember
 I am so far away.

ALEXANDER.

Nay, no caught breath !
 Sobs will not help my Duchess home.
 Ah, sweeting,
 They do not do up at Ferrara there
 As we in Rome : they live less joyously.
 But you, a woman, will be sensitive
 To all I stumble at the hinting of.
 The peg you sing to must be set less high,
 Less near Olympus. My bold horsewoman,
 You must not tarry as with me to watch
 The stallions worship Venus : those rich flames
 Are out of mode for Don Alfonso's wife . . .
 Your feet will often weary for the dance—
 You shake your head . . . Well, then, a fruitful couch,
 A sturdy race of princes be engendered
 To comfort you ! Lucrezia, O Lucrece,
 The Vatican without you—the procession
 Of gaudy midnights and no feather-footed,
 Sweet daughter making grace, embroidering
 The torchlight with her silver attitudes,
 And floating flash of diamonds, till the dawn
 Came to me from her swaying pearls, and eyes
 Half-open in the languid Spanish dance !
 Day after day my coffers will boil up
 With pearl on pearl for you . . . To-morrow morning

I shall drop in the largest of the East.
 And, Duchess of Ferrara, anything
 We can perform for you is done the moment
 It is but a desire within your hope.

LUCREZIA.

Dear Holiness, you whelm me with your love !
 Take care for me, my father, of your health.
 Cesare will be dutiful and anxious
 To make your evenings merry—but so soon
 Cesare will be from you at his wars.

ALEXANDER.

And I be left a gray, old priest alone !
 Well, I must bear my age and loneliness
 As of the time of life.

If you would comfort me,
 Daughter, in desolation—for already
 The Vatican is chilling, growing hollow
 Behind your cavalcade—then write to me
 At every sleeping-place or tarrying-place
 Along your way : and do not anger me
 With negligence. Be diligent and careful,
 As of your duty, to inform my thoughts
 With each event that touches you. To-night
 You rest at Castelnovo. Rest and eat !
 Then out with pen and let the little hand,
 Tired with the reins, yet for my foolish sake
 Write me good-night, thy health, the courtesy
 Shown to thee on thy way.

LUCREZIA.

Even beside my prayers
 I set this duty.

ALEXANDER.

Sweet, and most sweetly promised !
 Oh, my Lucrezia, you will never know,
 For Nature will not in her rule betray
 Her elder secrets to young ears, how fondly
 I love you in your fairness,
 That was your mother's lure about my soul. . . .
 Lucrece, your mother is both loyal and good :

Alfonso d'Este may acclaim your virtue,
If you are hers in worth as loveliness.

*Enter DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA
with little DON RODRIGO D'ARAGON.*

Cesare and your little son !

LUCREZIA.

[*Clasping her child.*] Rodrigo,
I leave you with your grandsire. . . . Ah, my feather !
You laugh to see it dancing. I will send you
Long feathers from the city where I dwell. . . .
O father, let me kiss you, let me see
Your hand upon his head. I cannot stay !
I am no more a bride—rather a corse
To leave all this behind.

ALEXANDER.

There, there, there ! Do not cry !
The child is sobbing, and my eyes . . . White Fairy,
Enchantress, you are loved and you are wept
By generations : by your sire, his son,
And by your son.

LUCREZIA.

Cesare does not weep.

ALEXANDER.

His eyes burn threateningly, his face is cold ;
That is a warrior's weeping.

Cesare,
We shall be dull as monks when she is gone.
To-night . . . I am the Pontiff, you almost
A Cardinal again. To think one woman,
A little bride, with streaming hair, can set me
Alone upon St. Peter's rock to weep !
Now guard thy health, pray ever to Madonna,
The glorious Virgin. *Benedicite !*
Into my arms once more ! O Cesare,
What I have lost to found you as a Prince,
To wed her safe to sovereignty ! My Este,
My own Lucrezia—

And the letter, child ;

Do not forget.

CESARE.

Come, come !

ALEXANDER.

Do not be ill ;

Do not forget.

[They part : CESARE leads her to the door.]

CESARE.

[Suddenly still and turning.] One kiss, but not farewell—
One kiss here in the Vatican !

ALEXANDER.

[Shaking his pastoral staff at CESARE.] O Traitor,
My temporal power would over-reach me thus ?
The last kiss from the Vatican will float
Out from the window yonder where I watch
The last long arrow-streak of your array
Toward Castelnovo. It will be a kiss,
And fly like autumn cranes to Africa.

[Exeunt CESARE and LUCREZIA.]

Gone, gone !

Here gather all the Cardinals.

The Sacred College enters.

Quick, to the window. . . .

[Lifting RODRIGO.] Up, my little man,
And see your mother leave us.

Ha, how trim

She sits, beside her Cesare, how grand !

I shall take journey

In April to Ferrara. . . . What if never,

If never I should see her any more ! . . .

My lord Antoniotto,

That is a sight Vergilian gods would praise !

SCENE IV

A room in the Castle of Sant' Angelo.

The LORD CARDINALS SEGOVIA and MICHELE, DON MICHELOTTO.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Where is the Duke?

MICHELOTTO.

With Messer Leonardo,
Learning the secret of an engine needing
A fortune for its efficacy. Where,
My lord Martino, is his Holiness?

CARDINAL MICHELE.

Gone with his cousin, it may be to join
Duke Valentino.

MICHELOTTO.

Coming hither
We had encountered.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Search the armoury.

[*Exit* MICHELOTTO.]

We live and breathe for armaments, for choice
Of this Condottiere or another
To lead them. In two days the Duke will march.
Then news and letters, or discourse of these,
Will fill our ears and fill the Vatican.
His Holiness is chafing, and on fire
With all the wishes of Duke Cesare.
He laughs ; but sometimes clouds :
—Comes to the Treasury, then leaves the door
Unopened, and the wrinkles of his face
Take seed of thoughts and teem.

Enter the LORD CARDINAL ORSINI.

CARDINAL ORSINI.

He is gone below . . .
Gone to the buried rooms where young Astorre,

Faënza's lord, for now a twelvemonth past,
Lies captive.

Have you seen the catapult?
It terrorises by its fashion. Come!

[*The CARDINALS pass out. After a few moments the
LORD ALEXANDER VI. and the LORD FRANCESCO
BORGIA enter together.*]

ALEXANDER.

Would he were in the Tiber!
A child so fresh and vigorous, a lad
As fair as Alexander, and a fame
As crescent. If we shut him up in marble,
A statue, we were justified: his body
Is of the ageless sculptures.

CARDINAL BORGIA.

Cousin,
You should not seek the prison-cells below.

ALEXANDER.

Our Lord looked on the Spirits shut in darkness:
Scarce He remitted sentence, but His face
Melted the iron; there was Paradise
And fragrance with His breathing.

This Astorre. . . .
Curse his fell jailor—triple murderer!

CARDINAL BORGIA.

Nay, in defence. . . .

ALEXANDER.

Of his ambition, of his majesty. . . .
O Tiber, but you do not heave; your current
Flows smooth!

And I, should not I pardon sin?
Here am I bleeding for his great offences,
With love not strong enough to snatch their load,
And fling them from my sight.

CARDINAL BORGIA.

You have absolved him, Father,
By your great power.

ALEXANDER.

Francesco,
Shall I absolve him with chained hands that tremble
Playing their gest of benison in Hell?
I will look up and curse him where he stands
Among the gods. . . .

Cousin, there is a succour
I drink of, as St. Bernard drank the breast
Stooped to him in his ecstasy. Our Lady
Keeps me in adoration. . . . But this Power
That bows us to his ends, as resolute
And cold as growing winter, is a god.

Re-enter MICHELOTTO.

Ah, Lucifer—his creature Michelotto!
I hate these dun, blue eyes:
This executioner, with trains of ghosts
And drops of gore behind him for a trail.

MICHELOTTO.

Your Holiness,
Will you be private with his Excellence?

ALEXANDER.

Cousin, retire!

[*Exit* CARDINAL BORGIA.]

We are in privacy.

[MICHELOTTO *bows and retires*. The POPE *seats himself*.]

'Tis Camerino first to be besieged. . . .

Ah, and the secret spring upon Urbino—
My leopard!—that must come to me as news!

Enter DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA.

Cesare, you have plighted oath of freedom
To that fair boy below.

[CESARE *smiles and lifts his shoulders*.]

CESARE.

The hour is portioned mine.

Of my demand you listen, Holiness.

*[He throws his black velvet cloak at the POPE'S feet and
lying down props his head against his father's knees.]*

Aut Cesar,

Aut Nihil! There is danger
From Fortune in this new campaign. My Captains,
The cursed Condottieri,
Are plotting to betray me. Holy Father,
Between us, you and me, there must be action
Of policy as ductile and as cool
As ever was concerted.

ALEXANDER.

True! With France

Incessantly adroit I must secure

Continuance of her aid. . . .

Danger and treason?

To you, my mystic Angel, treachery?

You take my heart out. . . .

Mary, Queen of Angels,

Protect our arms, protect my son!

And you—?

CESARE.

[Suddenly on his knees, close to his father's ear.]

These mercenaries—Baglioni,

Vitelli, the Orsini, in one grave

Shall sink entrammelled. . . . Do they know me yet? . . .

And their injurious arms be drawn of sting,

Their troops unweaponed.

ALEXANDER.

Ah!

CESARE.

I shall be slow in this:

You must not press my schemes.

Then I shall muster

Another army, fresh and of my land,

My own Romagnole shepherds from their fells.

These people of the slopes of Apennine

Sing me and weave my rule into their thews—
My Dragon's teeth, my arms of Italy !

ALEXANDER.

And these Romagnole shepherds are my flock ;
A spiritual army and a power
To keep you safe.

This combat pleases me ;

A conflict in the air—wit against craft !

[CESARE has sunk down again by his father's knee, his eyes lost in dream. ALEXANDER draws his face backward and gazes at him : CESARE smiles languidly.]

CESARE.

I have learnt all the Romans and the Grecians
Have taught of armies, of a prince's justice.
Both France and Spain will seek my armaments
To join my powers with theirs.

[Raising himself.] In this campaign
[Still kneeling, he fixes the POPE with his eyes.]

You have your own campaign to wage in peace,
Campaign of death. When I shall give you warning,
Seize the Orsini left in Rome, imprison
Lord Giambattista in the Borgia Tower ;
His coffers and proprietorships embrace
Armies and succours.

That great pearl is his,

The cardinal, benign, soft pearl.

ALEXANDER.

Aurora,

The whiteness of its orb !

CESARE.

And he will die.

Aut nihil !

ALEXANDER.

[With a slight shudder.] Ah ! . . . Send letters every day.

CESARE.

[Stretching out his hand and taking up a paper lying on the ground.]

What is this parchment ?

ALEXANDER.

You have read it,
 They told me. 'Tis the libel from Taranto
 Sent to Savelli.

Christ, we are a kindred !
 Carnage and rapine, perfidy. . . .

CESARE.

Why mince it ?
 Assassination, incest !

[*Rising from the ground with clenched hands.*]

ALEXANDER.

But the Latin !
 The dulcitude of apophthegm, the style !
 What sap in all this rankness. Cesare,
 I laughed an hour, applauded with wet eyes—
Literae humaniores—so the salt
 Of the strong farce compelled me.

Do you stoop
 To anger ? Consul Julius Cesar laughed
 When choice Catullus spat an epigram,
 And dined him that same evening.

CESARE.

Ho, but this poisoned insult
 Is danger such as that I have to charm
 Out of my army into sepulchre.
 The scribblers—fah ! the mercenary pens—
 Shall have their lesson in good manners : silence
 Laid on slit tongue and mutilated hand.

ALEXANDER.

You are too young !

CESARE.

Lanpoons
 Debase our currency.

ALEXANDER.

Hoo, hoo ! [*Reading.*] “ The New Mahomet,
 Antichrist ”—with his treasure lumped in jewels
 A little Duchess wears. Ha, ha !

CESARE.

Plague me no more ! You shall find all grown still.
Nascitur magnus ordo. . . .
 But to achieve my work ! Italian Vergil,
 How much to do, how much ! . . . I must have time,
 Have time before me, a wide path,
 A silent ; I must have my soldiery,
 Sons of the sheepfold, of the vineyard : time
 And patience and no noise, no sleep, no hastening,
 No languor. This new order is my will ;
 It is beautiful.

Guard deep my plot, my secret.
 We breathe combined?

ALEXANDER.

[*Nodding.*] Letters ?

CESARE.

[*Kissing the POPE's hand.*] Each instant
 I need your counsel or may do you good,
 Sending good news.

ALEXANDER.

What of that lad below ?

CESARE.

[*With an amused laugh.*] I shall not take him back to his
 Faënza. [*Exit.*]
 [*His voice outside.*] Don Michelotto !

ALEXANDER.

[*Calling.*] Cousin ! [*As CARDINAL BORGIA re-enters.*]
 Quick ! quick, Francesco ; I am ready.
 Give me your escort to the Vatican.
 Francesco,
 I knew the lad was doomed. God rest his soul !

SCENE V

*The Castle of the ESTE at Ferrara : the DUCHESS'S bed-chamber.
A group of MONKS in the background are holding the
parchment of DONNA LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ESTE'S will.*

DON ALFONSO D'ESTE *is seeking to restrain his father, who is
making frantic gestures of despair. In the midst of the
chamber DONNA LUCREZIA is extended on a litter-bed.*

Two DOCTORS *are anxiously bending over her with appliances for
bleeding. One of them uncovers her foot, looks at the
patient, then shakes his head despairingly.*

DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA *stands a little
apart, beside the couch.*

CESARE.

I shall visit thee again : for that revive !
Open thy eyes, Lucrece.

. . . Not dare to bleed her !

Give me the little foot. . . .

No sobs, Alfonso,

For I must have the surety of a smile.

Listen, Lucrece—

[*To one of the DOCTORS, who deprecates speech.*

This child is my chief captain,

We must confer. Keep quiet to your work.

[*The DOCTORS operate.*

[*To LUCRECE.*] But if you cannot listen, then remember !
What was my last assault ?

LUCREZIA.

On Camerino. . .

Straightway I took a little strength . . . the letter—

[*She makes a movement towards her pillow.*

CESARE.

You do not stir !

LUCREZIA.

An iron-grip, and yet

I do not cry for mercy : it supports.

CESARE.

The need is past—and but for mastery
I keep my hold.

I shall visit thee again ;
But ere I can make speed I promise thee
Such tidings— !

LUCREZIA.

I am dizzy.

CESARE.

No, Lucrece,
You are not dizzy : for I promise you,
If you will pledge me to remain alive,
That I will vanquish all my enemies.
But I must have the oath.

LUCREZIA.

A prayer—

CESARE.

The oath

LUCREZIA.

I cannot, death is on me. . . . Oh, I faint. . . .
[*The DOCTORS press round.*] A cordial. . . .

CESARE.

No, a treaty !

[*He lays the foot tenderly down and comes up close to
LUCREZIA'S ear.*

All my foes—
You can lay them in the hollow of my hand ;
Or, perishing, you can put out the fires. . . .
And all the engines of my brain extinct !

LUCREZIA.

What plots ? What would you do ?

CESARE.

[*Bending over her.*] I would fill all your cup.

[*In response to a movement from LUCREZIA, CESARE*

stoops down and kisses her. Then, as he raises himself, he turns to DON ALFONSO.

The danger is quite passed : let us give thanks.

[He folds LUCREZIA'S hands for prayer.

LUCREZIA.

[Raising herself.] The danger is quite passed, and I shall live.

SCENE VI

Sinigaglia : a red sunset over snow. In front the Archway of the Palace ; before it MESSER NICCOLO MACCHIAVELLI meets DON MICHELOTTO DA CORELLA.

MICHELOTTO.

See, Messer Niccolo !

We are even with our enemies. This rope—

New rope . . . the enemy

Of Florence, Vitellozzo, and with him

Oliveretto soon will tassel it.

Ha, ha !

The false Condottieri in one net,

Fast as the souls in Hell !

MACCHIAVELLI.

The fairest trap set by the coolest hand !

Madonna's blood ! Stupendous !—

Tell how the prey was trapped, Don Michelotto.

For since the Duke received me at Cesena

I met delay unlooked for. Artfully

These fools, these traitors had been brought to terms,

Bribes and dissensions seeding in their midst,

Till in mock penitence they won this town :

The Duke had quartered all their troops afar,

On pretext of the ground his troops must cover

When he marched in to hold the citadel—

So much was rumoured at Cesena. Thrill me

To the last fibre of my brain : relate !

MICHELOTTO.

The crazy fools, the bankrupts
 In fortune and in wit !
 Our Duke with gentleness, mansuetude
 Landed the waverers. . . His smile—
 Had you seen it finger this doomed shoal—his welcome,
 His kiss . . . the lure, a heavy spell
 We, his executants, broke off from, anxious :
 Such air a dragon sleeps in. Altogether
 Riding, they chatted conquests, paused at last
 Outside the palace . . . but a smile, the tickle
 Of expert angler, and a steady gesture—
 Solid they were within, their host excused
 For change of dress. . . .

Then cries, then execrations !
 Changed men, our prisoners, in our power, outwitted,
 White to the lids—for, Messer Macchiavelli,
 They had shaken us with ruin.

MACCHIAVELLI,

True !

Florence—and Rome—believed your master lost !
 A captain with no army, with rebellion
 The stuff of his command, and France unsure !
 He ruled himself as gods do. Of my knowledge,
 This lord Duke, *divus Borgia*, is superb,
 Magnificent and in himself a king.

MICHELOTTO.

Messer Ambassador, if thus you worship,
 Let Florence strike alliance with my lord :
 Your fruitless praise but brings his brow down, shapes
 His lips unkindly when the name of Florence
 Or that of Messer Niccolo drifts by.

MACCHIAVELLI.

I have written and will write
 To Florence and her Gonfalonier.

MICHELOTTO.

Basta !

Always what you will do, and Florence always
A paralytic !

Messer Macchiavelli,
Your face, while I related, took my eyes,
As you had been a fiery gallant, hearing
His love's deliverance vouched. Will a cold hanging-off
Bring any man to his desire? *Satana !*
I think your whole of statecraft is the rack ;
Your smile puts to the question . . . bah, my fingers,
My toes knot under it !

MACCHIAVELLI.

Then leave me, friend,
And knot your rope for Vitellozzo fast,
Fast for Oliveretto.

MICHELOTTO.

[*Turning toward the archway.*] Nay—behold !

*Enter through the arch DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA
ROMAGNA, on his white horse, in silver armour, crimsoned,
like the snow, with sundown.*

MACCHIAVELLI.

Congratulations, Excellence ! Believe me,
You have the brightest face in all the world.

CESARE.

Come close !
Your Florence, Messer Niccolo, has reason
To love me : all her petty enemies
Are in this hand for swallowing. Have I not
Betokened what I feed on, by my blazon—
A snake that gorges reptiles ? Ha, the meal !
Do you remember
The ogres in our nurses' tales laughed out
Before they gulped ? . . . To-night, to-night a supper
Of creeping tyrants !

MACCHIAVELLI.

Vitellozzo,

Oliveretto. . . .

CESARE.

Hoo ! My appetite !

Let Florence eat with me !

[*Closing his eyes and laughing.*] It was a game,
The catching of these imps !

Truth, Messer Niccolo,

I am a boy again !

Ho-heigh ! There will be music,
Romagnole pipes . . . I love that rocky hills
And streams should be in music. . . .

Michelotto,

Those rascal French are pillaging—see, there !

Go, hang a dozen, swing them high !

My citizens of Sinigaglia shall not

Be plucked by crows—up with a dozen, high !

[*Exit MICHELOTTO.*

[*To MACCHIAVELLI.*] Tell Florence she had better be my friend
Than enemy.

MACCHIAVELLI.

Always . . .

CESARE

No words—

Eloquent acts like mine ! Ingratitude

It were—no less—now I have made this banquet

If Florence show reluctance any more ;

And it would be resented.

We must ride

Round to the fortress : as the sun goes down

A conqueror's eye must look upon his army

To rule it as by light. . . .

And afterward . . . ha, ha !

The ogre's banquet, the Romagnole pipes !

Heigh, *festa, festa* ![*He rides on.*

MACCHIAVELLI.

Enchantment take me ! What a singular

And terrifying creature ! Dragon—yea,

Intelligent and deep ; a libbard faithless

As any spotted beast ; a Roman Eagle.

He fires me as some sovereign Cleopatra,

Infecting whom she animates.

O my poor Florence,
And I adore your Dread . . . ah, but with lust,
Not love, for I could injure him, bring ruin
Upon him, for your sake. . . . And yet those shoulders
Are high above all princes, Italy !
Those eyes droop over reaches of wide dream ;
The hand a vice ! Lilies of Florence, day
And night he is my fire ; I need no chafing—
Always a fire—not in my heart, good wife,
My scolding Marietta ; but in my head ;
And all my faculties a throng around it,
With reddened aspect and the cheer of life.
I am bewitched, growing in my enchantment
Magician rather than Ambassador
Of the Signoria : I possess a kingdom ;
And, when this Borgia smiles on me, a Prince.

[*The sun has set and stars come out over the snow.*]

SCENE VII

A secret cabinet in the Vatican. A snowy day.

The LORD ALEXANDER VI. chafes his hands by a charcoal brazier.

ALEXANDER.

How cold ! [Stirring the fuel.
And cold too in the turret. Ice and fire !
And the ice stronger than the fire—the fire
Mere dying ash !

O God, this Cesar !
Ancient of Days, what art Thou
Except Thou hast a Son executant,
And all Thy crafty thoughts are in His heart ?
Ancient of Days !

My forces
Are failing, I have lost my grip. This Cesar. . . .
Oh, he is tyrant over me ! I feel him
As a great stone my heart gives way beneath :
If he encroaches
There will be nothing in my breast but stone.

[MESSER PINCIONE *is introduced by* MONSIGNORE

BURCHARD, *who retires.*

Well, Messer Pincione? Is it cold?

Can you not answer when I question you?

PINCIONE.

Eh, Blessèdness.

I bring this from His Excellence the Duke. [*Giving a letter.*

ALEXANDER.

Warm yourself. . . . [*Reading*]. . . . Mortal cold!

But warm yourself.

Say, Messer Pincione, to your master,

Lord Cardinal Orsini languishes

In the strict prison of the Borgia Tower ;

And so has languished

Since his vile traitor-nephew was entangled

At Sinigaglia in the wondrous net.

PINCIONE.

Until he be Death's treasure, can you pounce,

Holiness, on his treasure? Can you feed

The troops that press the verge of Tuscany?

ALEXANDER.

True, true : our Duke requires his requiem, true !

Ah, Sinigaglia ; ah, the wondrous net !

And these Orsini—

A brood of enemies, the murderers

It may be of Giovanni. . . . Ho ! what cold ! . . .

Well, well !

A cruel kindred, a most wicked race,

Our enemies, our enemies, and worthy

Of death's extinguishing. [*Reading again.*

The postscript? Show me

This *cantarella*. [PINCIONE *gives him a phial.*

Ha ! It is like a sugar

Of pearl ; like the rare dust that Cleopatra

Drank of a dis-orbed pearl. Its facture? Tell me

The elements, how braised and how compounded?

PINCIONE.

Eh, eh—your Blessèdness.
 A boar being killed, and arsenic-poison salted
 About the entrails thrown to putrefaction,
 From thence at last a liquid is withdrawn
 In thrice-stilled deadliness.

ALEXANDER.

The action?

PINCIONE.

Slow,

But sure in death. . . .

ALEXANDER.

[*Calling.*] Poto!*He enters.*

Monsignore Burchard
 Finds the Lord Cardinal Orsini weary,
 And struggling with a pain that trusses him,
 A wild-fire inflammation?

POTO.

Sick,

And troubled with a flux.

ALEXANDER.

[*Sotto voce.*] Pain—and its end!

PINCIONE.

Your Blessèdness will give authority
 For what must intervene?

ALEXANDER.

Good Poto,

Take Messer Pincione to the jailer
 Who keeps the Tower. [*To PINCIONE.*] To-night, after the
 play,
 “Epidicus”—I cannot miss the play,
 Not for the quick or dead, and lenience,
 Some lenience we should give to sluggish nature—
 To-night I will receive you privately.

Well, Messer Pincione, will you stand
Till doomsday with your little heap
Of cruel pearls?

A VOICE.

[*Outside.*] A gift for Holy Father!

BURCHARD'S VOICE.

No, boy, go back!
The chamber is deep-secret. On the pain
Of death, go back.

ALEXANDER.

A gift!

Gifts are warm faggots on the winter coldness.
A gift! We will receive it.

Poto, hasten!

Take Messer Pincione to the Tower—

From the Duke Cesare. [*Exit POTO with PINCIONE.*]

'Twere merciful!

Queen Cleopatra drank the like for glory,

As this Orsini for his body's ease. . . .

The cold! How sudden is my age

Upon me as a drift! By all the devils,

I might be turned to stone!

Enter MONSIGNORE BURCHARD with a BOY.

Sa, sa! My present! Hither!

Anticipation has a zest. . . . God's rattle,

I am astounded—

This lightsome whiteness! The Orsini pearl,

The well-beloved, the whitest light of pearls,

The sun-confronting rainbows, moist and purple!

Boy, did you steal it?

THE BOY.

No. In his munificence

Lord Cardinal Orsini on his mistress

Bestowed this wonder; at his mother's prayer

It is presented to you for the boon

That she herself prepare his food. O Father,

She fed him in his helpless infancy;

Now, in his danger and imprisonment,

Create for her afresh the power sweet nature

Endowed her with, at need.

ALEXANDER.

[*Gazing at the pearl.*] Arched, various,
Of shower, of cloud, sun-braving, sun-embroidered,
The breast-drop of a goddess! . . . All your prayer!

THE BOY.

The order—now?

ALEXANDER.

The order from my hand.

Poto. . . .

He re-enters.

Bring pen and parchment.

It woos—ah, it assails!

[*Exit POTO.*

Abundance of enchantment!

POTO *re-enters.*

The paper—so! An order *Prius cibum*

Et potum ministrare Cardinali.

This charitable Brief well buys such beauty.

Comfort his mother; bid her

Season his dishes, but take cognizance

We must not set our heart upon our sons.

The motherly, rich heart—deny her? Nay,

But I am warmed to hear of such devotion.

A handsome woman too! Her son is sick,

Remember! *Addio!*

[MONSIGNORE BURCHARD *takes the Boy out.*

[*Holding up the pearl.*] Sweet child, on thy forehead,

My spotless Este, my far evening-star,

This white crest on thy white!

[*He stands absorbed and sad awhile.*

Now it comes over me the hand that offered

This pearl, the voice that offered was a woman's.

Venus! Lord Cardinal Orsini's mistress!

A pretty piece of faith. *Santi*—O Venus,

A kind heart that could lay this wonder out

To buy him wholesome feeding. . . . Yea, a woman!

I would have kissed the boy had I divined—

A woman! . . . *Sancta Virgo Virginum,*

Foederis Arca, thou hast saved my soul!

Saved of a pearl, *Janua Coeli*, saved!

I would not take an aged life: I appeal

To Providence to feed my raven, my
 Young, ominous, black raven ! He will come
 Down on me from his camp : then . . . *Dio meo !*
 I would give half my Papacy if never
 He might return. . . . Nay, nay ! . . .

Mater Purissima,

O gracious sun-pearl !

[*In black, and black mask, DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA glides in, closing the door behind him.*

CESARE.

[*Without unmasking.*] Splendid ! Put it by—
 France has forbidden me another stroke
 Of arms, and I have ridden
 Swift as the wind rides air, by day, by night,
 To reach your counsel, fix our policy.

ALEXANDER.

I have found France of late a slackening friend ;
 And I have dandled Spain and sung her soft ;
 At the first open moment she is ours.

CESARE.

Spain ! You would threaten France ?

Diavolo,

It is a game of patience quivering
 Upon its leash. . . .

ALEXANDER.

Are all the rebel-mercenaries slaughtered ?

CESARE.

Of the Orsini only one—Giordano
 Braves us at Bracciano. . . . Some one knocks.
 Send them away. [*He hides in a further closet.*

ALEXANDER.

Enter !

Re-enter POTO.

POTO.

Your Blessedness,

Lord Cardinal Orsini died this morning ;
 All our physicians
 Could not subdue his terror that has summoned
 The death it feared.

ALEXANDER.

You watched ?

POTO.

I watched him ; as a babe, he breathed his last.

ALEXANDER.

Good, good Orsini—as a babe ! His mother
 Bears but the common loss.

I am shaking, Poto.

Quick, to his private house, surprise the treasure ;
 Go, seal it ours ; go, inventory all. [Exit POTO.]
 [At the door.] Command Burcardus lay the Cardinal
 Where it is public to the scrutiny
 Of the whole world he died a natural death.

POTO'S VOICE.

Burcardus, Holiness, refuses portion
 In this affair.

ALEXANDER.

Poltroonery ! Then, Poto,
 Command his office.
 [Returning.] Heaven has interposed.
 [To CESARE, who advances.] Lord Cardinal Orsini
 Is dead now. . . .

CESARE.

Cantarella does not check.

It is game !

ALEXANDER.

Most sure. But, Cesare,
 The joy, the fortune—he has died by nature,
 And can be shown lying in simple death. . . .
[CESARE laughs derisively.]
 Your coming struck him dead, fair basilisk.
 Unshadow you. . . . The face !

CESARE.

No, I am soiled and marred.

I am not well.

ALEXANDER.

Giordano

Flaunts it at Bracciano? Cesare,
Unroost him; we will finish the whole brood.

CESARE.

He clings to France; we must not threaten him
Till we can threaten Louis.

ALEXANDER.

Straight

You shall unroost him.

CESARE.

No! The Lilies
Of France are the white badges of my fortune.
I shall not break with France too suddenly.

ALEXANDER.

This is my will and I must be obeyed.

CESARE.

[*His fingers twisting his sword-chain.*] Not mine.

ALEXANDER.

Unless you do this thing and bury
The brood that hates us, I withdraw from you
My treasure and I excommunicate
A disobedient son. It is my will.

[*CESARE'S fingers twist the chain so violently it snaps, and
the sword drops to the ground.*]

CESARE.

I am your fool . . .
The fool of all these Kings, this Pope. No throne!
There is no throne . . .
[*With a low bow.*] Your abject servitor!

ALEXANDER.

Hush ! But in this my will. Paternity
Sees with hot passion where the foe is hidden.
You yield obedience, son ?

CESARE.

Your fool, your fool !

ALEXANDER.

The voice so slack, my heart,
Its cordiality unbraced ! Nay, nay,
You are over-wearied. Come into your Stanze.
At your bedside, when you are laid to rest,
And have drunk wine and eaten, I will ponder
Our state-craft, and receive from you the story
Of Sinigaglia.

CESARE.

That is past.
Our talk must all lie onward. . . . Whew, the pain
Of riding rough for hours !

ALEXANDER.

I hate you black like this—night on your face.

CESARE.

I am marred.

ALEXANDER.

—But as you will. Come, rest.

ACT V

SCENE I

A very squalid, little street, giving on to the Tiber. It is low tide ; some few stars are coming out. A masked figure seats itself on the remains of an old barge, tilted up.

CHILDREN *peep from their play : then one of them whispers to his companions : they flee.*

A few BARGEMEN come up and observe the MASK ; one shakes his head.

BARGEMAN.

Better be absent ! No, no ! Do not observe him, Bernardo. If you hear nothing, see nothing, contain nothing, you cannot be hanged.

ANOTHER.

Do not cringe ; haul in those nets. 'Tis safer so.

[They set to work ; an oar drops with noise. One or two salute the MASK, but, at the slow turning of his head, they go away.]

[TWO CARDINALS land from the opposite bank ; they pause, then shuffle into the night.]

[The MASK shifts his posture.]

THE MASK.

My lusts are heavy in me,
Heavy and idle. I have poisoned Rome ;
It gasps and wriggles : not an ounce of flesh
In all this Rome but quivers in my shadow.
And what is next to do ? And who will fall ?
'They dream all fixed

Within this brain—and I am but an eagle
Moving subservient to the ranker air.

[*Another masked figure advances stealthily.*

Eigh, Michelotto !

MICHELOTTO.

[*In a whisper.*] Caught, gagged—those false Albanians !

CESARE.

Shall I sentence
A troop of tetchy mercenaries ? Ho,
Boon fellow, have I brought you here to-night,
By this dim waterside, to give me tidings
Of a few minnows trapped, that should be landed
Unconscious in the haul ?

I have seen burthen
Of princes on this back ; I have seen their jewels
Dangling from belt and chains. What sights
I have beheld. . . .

MICHELOTTO.

And shall, if you will trust me with your hopes.

CESARE.

Uncertain !

[*They are silent.*

Hopes—a hollow !

Slaughter the flocks of Ajax !

MICHELOTTO.

Stay !

God's health, you have your plans, or I am palsied !

CESARE.

[*Pulling MICHELOTTO'S ear-ring.*

Fondling, I have my plans : but not as God
Hovers His hand among the elements
To pick His missile ; rather as Olympus,
Blustering and fickle, backs the game at Troy.
[*After a pause.*] I am tense and weary ;
I dream too much—the fever of my dreaming
Strikes me at head of hosts,
And some in Spanish armour, some in French,
Innumerable hosts. . . .

[MICHELOTTO scans him anxiously; then rises, shaking himself.]

MICHELOTTO.

Come with me, come eaves-dropping ! Ho, my wits
Were never nimbler ; to each blood-caprice
I will give satisfaction, as a mistress
Stirs to appease her lord's carnality.

CESARE.

[*In the same tone.*] I watched you strangling Trocchio . . .
but my father

Wept with shut eyes his trusted secretary
Fled from his table to betray our dealings
With Spain to France. The Vatican is dull !
Scruples are there and injuries and age. . . .
[*On his feet.*] Why, like a hawk in ringing flight, I harassed
The creature for an hour to find if secret
From France we had cut off his treachery :
And in the Papagallo
My father wept ! Ho, Trocchio swings out now
Where all can see him from Sant' Angelo—
His master and the Curia and the people.
My father wept. . . . At noon was he not merry
When Cardinal Michele's death assured us
One hundred fifty thousand ducats ? *Ecco !*
I did not sing my *cantarella's* praise.
Dull at the Vatican !

And what to do ?

Join Spain and join Gonsalvo, a commander
Even of my wing, the conqueror of Naples ;
Or hold obsequious in my tethered hand
The Gallic fleur-de-luce ?

Unpleasant gulfs,
Shoals ! . . . And to poise before the Balances
Watching their poise !

MICHELOTTO.

But you regret no action ?

CESARE.

[*Stalking to the edge of the water.*] I do not weep by
graves ! . . .
Looking across the cities that I love,

Across the sheepfolds and the little cities. . . .

[*His voice trembles and he laughs.*]

Pastoral! And for cause *Vicarius sum*
Sanctae Ecclesiae! . . . Good Michelotto,
 Hire me a boat, and row me down the stream.

SCENE II

The Garden of the Vatican, toward sunset.

The LORD ALEXANDER VI., *the* LORD CARDINAL BARTOLOMEO
 OF SEGOVIA, *the* LORD BISHOP OF VENOSA *and* MON-
 SIGNORE GASPARE POTO.

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

The sun eats as a canker.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Rome

Is festering with this fever like a pest.
 I move and speak with strange uneasiness,
 As if the motions of my life had fear.

ALEXANDER.

Sol in Leone! There is nothing pleasant
 When the year fills that tract . . . rage, rage, and sandy,
 Consuming light!

I live a damp, old horse,
 O'er-riden by the ardour of the air:
 No neatness round my throat, the cope flung off,
 And all the passion of my flesh for shade.
 Here there are shady grottoes from the darkness
 Of trees; the heat is here unpressed by walls;

[*Little* DON RODRIGO *and* DON GIOVANNI *come from*
behind a shrubbery.

Here children at their play
 Show us their lissome bodies and red faces
Sol in Leone cannot agitate.
 My lords, you see we sink on holiday,
 And, fearful, take much care to keep our person

From danger—so persuaded by these deaths
Of daily happening : under ilex-trees
We ply our statecraft.

France has bidden us
Prove our fidelity and help her king
To oust from Naples Spain. Our holy troops
And gonfalon will be in readiness
Within six days, and we must part awhile
From our Duke Cesare.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Wise sacrifice !
You know the Church has all to gain from France.

ALEXANDER.

So it is thought, my lord.
. . . Well, mite, Giovanni !
You run across the gravel with a shell,
A little, empty house, and hot as lead
Fired from a cannon ?

Nestle all your curls
Under a few, large vine-leaves. Tell Rodrigo
He must not dip his head within the fountain—
The cold will make him break out of a plague.
Run, run and pull him from the brim. . . . Yes, baby,
Leave me your shell.

My lords, go in awhile.
Poto shall serve cooled wine.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

No, no !
To drink increases thirst. I will not drink.

ALEXANDER.

Cooled wine—

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

No, no !
[*The POPE laughs deprecatingly.*]

ALEXANDER.

I have not poisoned it.

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

No, no !

[*They bow deeply to each other, and POTO takes the
CARDINAL and BISHOP within.*]

ALEXANDER.

[*To one of the children, as he perceives his son.*
Roble, play further off !

[DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA
comes to his side.]

Just up and had your meal ?

There is some sense in your strange hours when *Sol*
Is in *Leone*—night for day !

But, though your room be marble, what Inferno
Of flame to sleep through the bare hotness.

CESARE.

Father,

If you enjoy the fresher feel of night,
I bring an invitation you will welcome
From the Lord Adrian of Cornuto.

ALEXANDER.

Ah,

He has a vineyard under broad-leaved shadow,
Where gods could sup.

CESARE.

Where you will sup,

To-morrow evening.

ALEXANDER.

Baccho !

It will be cool. The country is a blessing
To think of when it darkens and revives.

CESARE.

You will not heat with riding at that hour.

ALEXANDER.

And I am careful now . . . a little anxious
To see you start.

CESARE.

Too hot and still
For camps or marches . . . like a painful dream !
[*He sits by his father.*]

ALEXANDER.

Ay, so, so !

Cesare, if this strong heat
Struck me with apoplexy, pest, or fever,
You would be struck with peril. . . . O my heart,
My prince, could you endure from your own root,
And bear the shock of onset ?

CESARE.

Always

I built broad the foundations of my power.
The kindred
Of all I dispossessed are gone from earth,
Where no successor of your Holiness
Could raise them my opponents : half my train
Is filled with high-born nobles, once the servants
Of Colonnese and Orsini, now
My gentlemen and hung upon my fortune
As it were hope itself : the Sacred College,
You know, is more than half subservient to me. . . .
But—are you ailing ?

ALEXANDER.

No, no—hot and dull,
Not ailing.

CESARE.

There are dancers, courtesans,
Who will in movements of the long-lost breeze
Fan the dead air—if you will visit me
To-night : to-morrow in the vineyard-garden
We sup. . . . 'Tis hard to get the dancers now :
The women shut their doors and strike their bodies
In terror at the fever that can kill.
They need await no other—lust is dead.
. . . . You will announce at the next Consistory
I join the French ?

ALEXANDER.

Ay—with the treaties
 Between us and the Spaniards and Gonsalvo
 Safe in my coffers : for the French will fail ;
 And, though they raised you up, they hold you back
 From Florence and your clutch on Tuscany.
 You have Romagna firm.

CESARE.

O father,
 Live a few years and I shall be your king !
 As you love me, live till Tuscany is mine.
 Live, live !

ALEXANDER.

For you
 I have done harder things than conquer death.
[They are silent.]
 What are the great eyes dreaming of ?

CESARE.

The heat,

And something dreadful in it—of the places,
 Corneto, Piombino, yet ungirdled
 By one domain.
[Rising impetuously.] Oh, to desert the French !
 Although I march
 As of their army, at their first reverse
 We close the northern passages.

ALEXANDER.

Ha, ha, ha ! ha !

A trap for Louis. . . .
 —Cardinal Michele
 Was suddenly distempered by this ill,
 Dying as swiftly as if venom wrought :
 So fatal is the weather to stout frames !
 Son, I incline to fat. . . . I would I owned
 Your thin and agile limbs.

CESARE.

I would that half the years
 Of my short life—for, like Achilles', short
 My life will be, if glorious—I might give
 To build yours over four score years and ten !

ALEXANDER.

Ah, God ! Such wishes weigh on me unkindly,
 . . . Nay, not unkindly ! But your eyes are swept
 So wide across the breadths of Italy,
 You call up years for me as if you were
 A necromancer, not my very son
 Whose proud, hot Spanish blood, whose fire and courage
 Have given my flesh its youth again so often.
 Your mother's land is changing you, beloved—
 All schemes, all plots . . . and where now is the smile
 That flashed along your lips and made me sing
Ave Maria plena gratia—where ?

[CESARE moves impatiently.]

CESARE.

I am grown anxious, as my foemen's watch
 When one of my huge pieces takes its station
 For ruin's work. . . . This pestilential heat !
 . . . Well, Roble, what an orange you have snatched,
 Round as your eyes !

[To ALEXANDER.] Lucrece !—Oh, have you seen her
 Look at you from the child ?

[With a bitter laugh.] I shall begin
 To talk of years ago, like an old man.
 Farewell !

They need me at the Mola.

[With a smile.] Then to night
 The dance ! To-morrow the *al fresco* feast ! [Exit.]

ALEXANDER.

I'm envious of Lucrezia, and weary,
 More weary than with August—all my passion
 Hard on my heart at last ! My Cesare,
 —Beautiful and cold as steel, his mind
 Shining and shallow as the moon—for certain,
 If he had been Medea, he had simmered
 My ageing body in the cauldron's flood,
 Like Æson's, for his purpose. . . . Solitary !
 Age, age ! And when the young are still,
 The young who should be noisy, it is vacant.
 I shall see Lucrezia in the spring : and yet
 I know I shall not see her.

There, I am glad

The children have been captured by their nurse.

Buona notte, little ones ! [*The CHILDREN are taken away.*]

Ah, but I would

I were as other fathers, and could make him

My heritor, and aid him by my death.

It is so good the old should die ;

It is very good to die, but I must live ;

I must subserve, must give my hand

In signature to any of his dreams,

Taking, *in caritate*,

A lovely eye-glance from him. . . . And Lucrece

Gone too, her husband's prisoner ! Where my Pearl

And my great royal Diamond have been set

Here in my bosom—hollows !

And this twilight

Is filling them. . . .

[*With a sudden, terrified cry.*] Lucrezia, Cesare !

Lucrece !

SCENE III

The POPE's bedchamber in the Borgia Apartments.

MONSIGNORE BURCHARD *at the bed's head watching : two card-players at a little table by the bedside.* The LORD ALEXANDER VI. *is sitting up in bed, his glazed eyes fixed on the game.* A crowd of PHYSICIANS, SURGEONS, APOTHECARIES. The CARDINALS *consulting anxiously with the POPE's CHIEF PHYSICIAN, the LORD BISHOP OF VENOSA.*

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

Does he see ?

Does he attend ?

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

He sees ; but if the dying

Attend, or how to construe their attention,

Whether their eyes are purged, or focus fresh

We scarce may reckon. These illumined eyes

Are abstract, steady in their fever-light :

My lords, ere morning we shall see them fade,
Or soften into life. A child-like nature,
That may just slip away, or, fronting death,
As at a play, leave the grim stage behind,
And join us unsuspecting in the street.

Enter BONAFEDE, LORD BISHOP OF CHIUSI, hurriedly.

BONAFEDE.

Physician !

VENOSA.

Ay, lord Bonafede—you
Come from a bed of even graver sickness,
More tragic, youth contending.

BONAFEDE.

Hush ! Duke Cesare
Has but one thought—His Holiness.

VENOSA.

[*Taking the BISHOP by the shoulders to the bed.*] That message,
Repeat it. . . . Then the trance
May lighten or remove.

BONAFEDE.

[*To the POPE.*] Most well-beloved,
Duke Cesare asks from his bed of sickness
For tidings of you. Every hour he sends,
And every hour
I droop him with despair. Speak of him, bless him ;
Assure him of your energy to live.

ALEXANDER.

[*Smiling from his dark eyes.*] Lord Bonafede, you are
temporal.
Look there. . . . I watch the game. I do not care
Now who is playing or who wins : I watch.

BONAFEDE.

The Duke is very sick.

ALEXANDER.

Look there ! The Chance,
And how it tosses to and fro !

BURCHARD.

My lord
Takes interest in the fortunes of the game ?
[*The POPE nods.*]

ALEXANDER.

I rally—
Ay, honest Burchard, set it down—I rally.

CARDINALS.

Then speak your last requests.
—How can we serve you ?
—What of Duke Cesare ? Your benediction !
—What of your soul ?

ALEXANDER.

I am too busy dying. Bonafede—
This dying is itself a little house,
And one within
That cherishes soft as a nurse, indulgent,
And lets one wake or sleep.

[*To one of the CARD-PLAYERS.*] How foolish of you !
You have lost your chances, listening to my talk.
You have no meaning
Unless you are intent upon the game.
Kiss me, good Bonafede, and your prayers.

[*Exit BONAFEDE weeping.*]

Now leave me to the air.

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

He will fall asleep.

ALEXANDER.

I promise you
That I will make no noise. . . . I ever
Slept as a child, and wallowed in the feathers
Seven times at waking . . . ha ! And do you sleep
Till time for the next Office. Burchard dozes ;
Put by the cards, and I will watch his face.

[*The CROWD withdraws from the bed : the POPE chuckles, after fixing his eyes on BURCHARD ; then his eyes close.*

CARDINALS.

How wanton of his end !
 —What of his soul ?
 —The noontide
 To me is full of strange attentiveness.
 Angels, or fiends ?

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

Has he not made confession ?

CARDINALS.

Ay, of concupiscence and simony,
 If one may dare surmise—his open sins.
 But of his secret sins ! Think how they hide
 And loom where fear is with them in men's thoughts !
 —'They say he sold his soul to Lucifer
 For full eleven years ; and all are told.

[*A wind stirs the curtains.*

—He comes, he comes !
 —An apparition like a monkey ! Horror !
 A straggling darkness. . . .
 —Are you sure ? A monkey ?
 —And sounds !
 Far more than seven devils are watching us.

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

He has received Viaticum, Last Unction.

CARDINALS.

Ah, but he cannot die until his Master
 Rise from below to take him, cannot die
 As sinners do accepted by their God.
 —He sleeps when he should die.
 —Closed up in sin,
 A sullen Viper of the woods !
 —Remember . . .
 Think of the death of Cardinal Michele,
 Think of the Cardinal Orsini, think
 Of Don Alfonso, Duke Astorre !
 —Ay,
 Think of the Lady Daughter.

BORGIA

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

Tales and bibble-babble !
 Go, chatter with your monkey, fraternise !
 He will not tickle this last sleep, my lords ;
 Give him your company.

A CARDINAL.

But tell us, Doctor,
 Low in the ear, have not this son and father
 Drunk of the cup Orsini and Michele
 Drank at their hands ? Have they not been envenomed ?

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

Yea, by the hand of God, but not of man—
 The venom of His secret pestilence,
 The fever walking in this August air.

THE SAME CARDINAL.

Both struck together—is not that the singing
 Of *cantarella* ?

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

By my faith, lords—no.
 The hand of God hath struck, and who shall tell
 How far His mercy or His wrath is set ?
 Physicians cure by hope.

Re-enter LORD BONAFEDE.

BONAFEDE.

The lord Duke Cesare
 Is worse. Physician !

CARDINAL SEGOVIA.

[*To the* BISHOP OF VENOSA.] Can you leave this bedside ?
 You cannot !

BISHOP OF VENOSA.

[*Rising.*] Youth !
 Youth and desire of life !
 [*To attendants.*] Fetch me a mule,

And from its hollowed entrails we will tear
 Our Cesar reconceived, regenerate :
 Or, should the live heat fail, fetch me an oil-jar,
 Brimming with vault-drawn water. Haste for life !
 The Duke is worse. He shall survive.

[*The POPE has opened his eyes.*

Dear Father,

I will bring you in an hour word that your Duke
 Makes speed to visit you.

[*The DOCTOR and the other SURGEONS and APOTHE-
 CARIES, with the CARDINALS and ATTENDANTS, pass
 in an excited company from the room.*

ALEXANDER.

[*To himself.*] But Burchard
 Alters no muscle : nothing of importance
 Therefore has passed. . . .

My Chronicler,
 And I have never looked into your books !

[*Glancing round, pleased.*

Ah, they have left me lonely ! How delicious
 It is to be neglected when one dies.

[*Mischievously tickling BURCHARD'S nose with a fan that
 lies on the bed.*

Burchard, good-night !

BURCHARD.

[*Yawning.*] O Holiness !

ALEXANDER.

You are napping at your post !

It does not matter.

You looked so ugly when you lay asleep,
 I waked you : comely
 You are when stiff and handsome in your clothes.

[*BURCHARD stands formal before his master, who looks
 up at him, appealingly.*

Bright eyes,
 Take no more record of me : do not publish
 These stains, these swollen limbs.

Give me the mirror

That my last breath shall soil—that is its use !
 But I will snatch it as in youth. . . . Vanozza,

Giulia, and a little earlier one—

Well, well, I gave them happiness.

[BURCHARD, scandalised, seeks a crucifix.

Good Master

Of the Ceremonies, did you take account

Of my beauty when you chronicled my dress?

I have been very handsome . . .

He is gone,

Stolen off in horror at my vanity.

And yet this beauty is not vanity ;

The vanity is when it falls away,

And crumbles into nothingness.

Even our Lady

Keeps power of intercession for us all

By loveliness that in simplicity

Draws God to will its pleasure as His will

And perfect pleasure.

[Folding his hands.

Rosa Mystica,

O Flower of God, O Rose, O Spotless one,

Thou dost unfold to us thy sweet—in showers

Thy fragraney, thy dews are shed on me ;

Thou droppest on my darkness as soft leaves.

[He lies back, his eyelids softly stirring.

And there are scents—delicious—violets

And roses—unexpected—dropping down,

And running through the air. So unexpected,

So secret to me . . . Violets, a gift,

As women give fresh from the hand . . .

The flowers !

[He lifts himself, rounding his arms to garner the vision.

[BURCHARD advances with LORD BONAFEDE and several
CARDINALS.

BURCHARD.

The Lord Duke is revived.

ALEXANDER.

No matter now ;

I am dying, I am safe. [Rolling on his side away from them.

There, do not crowd me—

My heart is offered. *Ite, missa est.*

SCENE IV

The Palace at Ferrara.

The DUCHESS LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ESTE, dressed in mourning, in a small room. She is feeding birds.

LUCREZIA.

My doves,
My little, gladsome ones. . . . Rodrigo ! . . .
My little Roman dove, my young, a softness
Still to my bosom. . . .

And this father—
His love to me, and all the streams of pearls !
They have not honourably buried him ;
They are not sorry.

[She weeps.

I have prayed so long :
I have been angry. In my dreams I prayed ;
And then he broke it, for he came to me,
His lips bulged out for kisses : “ Dance, Lucrece,
Dance to me, child ; it is that grace prevails ! ”

[After a pause—to the doves.

There, there ! Fly out ! There ! Flutter on my shoulder,
And let me catch you.

Father, do you mark,
I am not weeping ?—See, how they all settle
About me, on my head, and on my bosom—
See, how I rise and flutter them !

[She rises and the doves disperse from her in troops.

How lightsome
They come back to their roost ! Dear Blessèdness,
And this will give you peace. . . .

[Suddenly she bows her golden head ; the doves flutter down on it in a halo.

CESARE.

I am no Prince. . . . My lands
Are almost gone ; only the citadels
Keep pledge of my old force. You and your Pope
Gave me no tenure on the earth. I curse you,
I curse you both. What was there left but ashes
For me, he being extinguished ?

VANOZZA.

Excellence, you brought me
Along with you, and from our enemies,
For safety.

CESARE.

—It is blood,
The fascination of deep heritage,
Compels the old race back to every city
I vaunted mine. . . .

I do not want you near ,
I brought you out of danger. Openly
You are my mother, openly I drew you
Behind my litter to a refuge : always,
Till I am powerless, you will feel my power,
Protecting you. . . .

Enter MESSER AGAPITO DA AMALIA.

And is Giovanni Sforza
Restored to Pesaro ?

AGAPITO

My lord, he is.

[CESARE *makes a hissing groan.*]

CESARE.

Is Guidobaldo in Urbino yet ?

AGAPITO.

My lord, he is.

CESARE.

And all the Duchy lost ?

AGAPITO.

All the fair Umbrian Duchy has relapsed
From your control.

[*A silence.*]

CESARE.

Pandolfo Malatesta
Has entered Rimini?

AGAPITO.

Oh, cease to question
More of your fortune, with the purple
Of pestilence across your lips, the trembling
Of fever in your hands of war, beloved.

CESARE.

Giacomo d'Appiano has returned
To Piombino?

AGAPITO.

Yes.

CESARE.

Ah, to my Piombino,
Messer da Vinci
Has re-erected for defence, a jewel
Wrought by a cunning jeweller, a threat
To Florence, a towered joy! So d'Appiano
Calls it his own again?

AGAPITO.

Yes, and it called him back.

CESARE.

Agapito, there still is worse behind.
Something not said is in you—publish it!

AGAPITO.

Don Michelotto by the Florentines
With his whole troop is captured.

CESARE.

Michelotto!
My curse on Florence! Messer Macchiavelli
Promised safe-conduct to him . . . and delayed,

Playing me false. . . . What, Michelotto lost !
 All of my army, but these failing troops
 Camped on this sultry marl. Revolted dogs,
 That fawned about my chase !

. . . Agapito,

Faithful, my pen, my representative
 As signature is of oneself, go yonder,
 Beside the cypress, gaze along the verge,
 Where the great plateaux bow down to its base
 From the Tiber valley : see if the Lord Vera
 Is riding hither
 With news of our new Pontiff.

My suspense—

Forced by the Sacred College to withdraw,
 When ill almost to death, my troops and cannon
 Ten miles away from Rome !

Agapito !

[*He lays his hand on his SECRETARY'S.*

—Hot ?

AGAPITO.

[*Kissing his hand.*] Still the cruel sickness, empire's canker ?

[*Turning to the cypress-mound.*] I will look out.

[*He stands by the trees. The MUTE half-rears herself up, her face to the horizon.*

CESARE.

[*To VANOZZA.*] You gave me

No rights : then why not happy chance ? Of chance
 Has been my life, fortune my reeling glory.
 Why did you bear me under stars conspired
 Against the hour when fortune was supreme
 For gain or loss ? I am a thing of hazard. . . .
 You could not breed even luck in me, or give me
 The moment that is power.

[*VANOZZA looks at him a long time in silence : then she falls on her knees at his side, and presses her lips against the ruby ring on his thumb.*

VANOZZA.

But I affirm

You are more wonderful than all the stars ;
 You are immortal for great fame, for greater

Than I can give the wording of. I bore you—
 You are sacred, sacred. All the saints of heaven
 Hold you in virtue! I had many dreams
 When you were born. My Prince, though I could give you
 No rights, and fortune is not in our hands
 To give it where we love, I give you faith,
 A mother's, simple as the faith I give
 To the High God—though He were poor, and nowhere
 Had place to lay His head.

CESARE.

No marvel
 My father, God's own Sovereign-Vicar, loved you
 For over twenty years and with deep fire,
 As Jove loved mortals, as he took Europa
 On broad bull-shoulders, over many seas,
 To the quiet cave where she should bear a king.
 No marvel that this beauty,
 Proud even to rudeness in its provocation,
 Was as his hearth! Rodrigo Borgia's son
 Asks your forgiveness.

VANOZZA.

Excellence! . . . But loose me!
 Are you so strong?
 Your breath beats at the nostrils as his beat.
 Loose! . . . Let me meet Messer Agapito. . . .
*[The MUTE has pointed toward the horizon, touching
 AGAPITO'S sleeve; he has watched intently for some
 time, and now advances.]*

AGAPITO.

News, news, Signore!
 I did not tell you till these travellers
 Were at our very gates.

CESARE.

[Shivering.] The dew comes down.
 Mother, the cloak with ermine! *[She goes out.]*
*[The MUTE creeps under the bushes to the further side of
 the litter and takes CESARE'S hand that falls that way.]*

LORD CARDINAL GIOVANNI VERA OF PERUGIA *enters attended.*

VERA.

Della Rovere,

Since you packed cards with him to save your Duchy,
Vicariate and Gonfaloniership,
Selling him all your Spanish votes, has triumphed,
Yea, of your making, is Pope Julius now,
Julius the Second.

CESARE.

Julius—Cesar

Must be allies.

VERA.

I knelt down at his feet,
I told his Holiness you lay in peril,
Close on your death, and longed to die in Rome.

CESARE.

[*With a laugh.*] Well, he was touched ?

VERA.

He welcomes you,

Gives you your old apartments in the Palace,
And only dwarfs your escort to a hundred
And fifty men.

CESARE.

[*Touching VERA'S wrist.*] Lord Vera,
He told me, in hot pleading of his cause,
Perchance I was his son. Conceive it, Vera—
Twice of St. Peter's line ! We are complaisant,
For we can take all glory at its worth.

[*MADONNA DE' CATANEI returns with the cloak of crimson and ermine. She and the MUTE wrap it round CESARE'S shoulders.*

O mother, hear ! [*Breaking into merry laughter.*
The Vatican receives us as before ;
The Vatican ! [*VANOZZA brushes tears from her eyes.*
And shortly

We shall recover all our own again,
 Rimini, Piombino, Imola,
 The duchies and the principalities.
 Even now each fortress in Romagna keeps
 As a locked coffer proof against our foes.
 The Vatican ! The Stanze !
 The Gonfalon ! We hold our very course.

SCENE VI

The Papagallo in the Borgia Apartments.

*The LORD JULIUS II. meeting DON GARCILASO DE LA VEGA,
 Spanish Ambassador.*

JULIUS.

No, Don Garcilaso, I am resolved.
 Here you will be received no more. Look round,
 And bid farewell ;
 For in these tainted rooms I will not live :
 The reek of blood, the breath of heathendom
 Hang on them, and old perfumes of old orgies
 Float, if one wrings the velvets. Antichrist !
 Marranô ! Devil !
 His whelp, this Valentino—sorry schemer—
 Is caged, but only
 By promises of freedom can we wrench
 The castles of the Holy Church away
 From the hooked talons. Mark me !
 Never must Valentino slip us, never
 Must he have range. . . . Jove placed all Ætna over
 The lawless powers of Earth . . . I pass him on
 To Naples, to Gonsalvo, when he yields
 His castles up, as hostage that they yield :
 But, since your lord King Ferdinand, nor I,
 Nor true Gonsalvo can break word of faith,
 Not even to Perfidy's own Sovereign Prince,
 Persuade your lord the king, and from my lips,
 To have this murderer of his brother seized
 At instance of the Duke of Gandia's widow,
 Then shipped to Spain, to the Hesperides,
 And to his last account.

DON GARCILASO.

*Laudabilis**Perfidia ! . . .* On my faith !

The Carthaginian faith—yet I applaud.

[*Meditating.*] Arrested for the murder of his brother,

So old a sin, and blotted out so clear

By fresher stains. . . .

JULIUS.

[*Pointing to a picture by PINTORICCHIO on an easel.*

Behold the family—

I will erase these images, these vile,

Contaminating forms : posterity

Shall have no pleasure of these mingled snakes ;

For one by one these chambers shall be sealed

In their pollution, as a sepulchre.

DON GARCILASO.

Good, good ! You will erase their pictures—good !

But the arch-hypocrite himself, this flower

Of the fiend-brood, can you erase him ?

JULIUS.

Wait !

[*They part, and the POPE passes on to the Borgia Tower.**The PAPAL GUARD marches in and files behind him.*

SCENE VII

*The Borgia Tower in the Vatican.*DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA is facing the
LORD JULIUS II.*In the prison with him are* MONSIGNORE GASPARE TORELLA,
MESSER AGAPITO DA AMALIA, *the* LORD CARDINAL
GIOVANNI VERA OF SAN BALBINE, *and some Spanish Car-*
dinals.

JULIUS.

Your Castellan has hanged my messenger.

CESARE.

Faithful !

JULIUS.

You promised
Cesena should surrender.

CESARE.

Ha, it knows
The false word of command ; it will not answer
Its lord in treason to himself, controlled
By force and the malignity of Fate.

JULIUS.

Spawn of a harlot, if you brave the Church,
Reserving her possessions, you descend
Into the Mola's deepest cells to perish
Of darkness and the phantoms through the dark
Your serpent eyes will follow. This same hour
You will descend in night unless you render
The watchword of your castles. Render it !

CESARE.

[Retreating as if from a blow.]

Your promise ! You instated me ; I gave you
My Spanish votes for the Vicariate
Of my Romagnole cities. I am still
Your Gonfalonier ; and you press me thus . . .
Fool, I believed your pledge !

JULIUS.

—To hand

Our Papal fiefs and lordships to the Wolf?
We gave you but your own and your own life.
Cur of the Devil !
And you can speak of oath or pledge ! How simple
Such plea from you ! Could Sinigaglia hear !
I'll not be tricked. Dog in a doublet, villain !
Unbosom !

[He strikes his staff on the ground and grasps CESARE'S vest.]

CESARE.

[Suddenly slipping down to JULIUS' feet.

Holiness,

Secure your castles from the grasp of Venice !
 While they are ruled by me, impregnable
 They stand about the country ; they remain
 The castles of the Church. But publish me
 A traitor to these walls my sword has won,
 The strongholds lapse to Venice. For a Pope
 I won them, let me hold them for a Pope—

[With a faint smile.

Under the shadow of your wings.

JULIUS.

The watchword !

CESARE.

Let me hold them in their strength
 For Rome, the Church !

JULIUS.

Your watchword !

CESARE.

[Rising with flame in his eyes.

It will storm my heart . . . I cannot.

JULIUS.

Then you have chosen
 A lifetime in the dens your victims haunt.
 Mule ! And the Guard is waiting . . .

Son of Hell !

[He makes a sign to summon the PAPAL GUARD.

CESARE.

[With a wide gesture.] Freedom !

JULIUS.

. . . Speak out,

Or write your watchword, and Lord Santa Croce
 Shall wait with you at Naples, till I hear
 Cesena makes submission: then you pass
 Free, where you will.

The PAPAL GUARD enters.

CESARE.

My freedom !

AGAPITO.

Excellence, dear lord,
As you have pity on our love, unbury
The word that makes you free.

CESARE.

Agapito !

You are as I. . . .

[*In a whisper.*] Write it. [AGAPITO turns to the desk.

O my Cesena,
A word to soil you !—Overthrown,
Forli, Cesena, and my guardian Rocca,
Proof against every hazard, save your lord's
Betrayal of your honour ! Fallen—O fallen !
The walls—the walls before me !

[JULIUS has moved to the table to receive the writing.

CESARE throws himself prone on his couch and does
not move.

A CHAMBERLAIN enters.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Holiness,
Messer Buonarotti, waits command.
He brings a drawing of ten Victories
Nighed in your monument.

JULIUS.

Ah, the winged Victories,
Each triumphing above a subject province,
Disarmed beneath her feet. How terribly
This chafing Florentine achieves my future !
Ten times a victor, yet no war declared :
The Church triumphant—ay, since militant !

AGAPITO.

[As the pen falls from his hand and he gives the writing to JULIUS.

All that my lord can do
Is done : if still the fortresses maintain
Their loyalty to their effective Duke,
He takes no fault and he demands his freedom.

JULIUS.

[With a burst of laughter, as he reads the watchword.
The forts must yield:
If they resist our sovereign voice they ruin
Themselves and their usurper. *[Pointing to CESARE.*
He is lost.

AGAPITO.

Then let me further write.
[Turning to the others with the paper JULIUS has returned.
Be witnesses, you, you. . . .
Now countersign my words ! His liberty
Derives but from his castellans—that conquers !
They will ride forth beneath his banneroles,
Crying their *Duca, Duca !*

JULIUS.

They shall dislodge, cast down
His scutcheon on the ground and hoist the Keys.
[Exit with the PAPAL GUARD.
[LORD CARDINAL VERA approaches CESARE'S couch,
then shakes his head and joins the others.

VERA.

It is too sore ! When he was but my scholar,
As if the son of a great potentate
He breathed to rule, his glance made heritage.

TORELLA.

This pestilential fever
Has worked down to the scath, the sunken rock,
His taint of blood : he is involved, uncertain ;

The level brain has sprung at accident,
And scattered loose the logic of his dreams—
Broken and lost.

BONAFEDE.

Had he but drawn his army
Clear of this Rome and leapt on Pisa, had he
Refused to sell his votes he had been saved.

CESARE.

[*Suddenly lifting his head.*]
You were throwing dice. . . . Continue! Play the game.
[*Silently two SPANISH GENTLEMEN seat themselves near
his couch and play. He turns on his elbow and watches
them, passing his ball of perfume from hand to hand.*]

AGAPITO.

[*In a murmur to TORELLA.*]
For hours, long hours, impassible he fixes
His eyes upon the board, as if the secret
Of Destiny were secret of a Sphinx
He could divine by watching.

CESARE.

[*Still fixed on the game, but speaking to all.*] Without doubt
Our fortune is unchained against us, friends:
But there are chances—let us reckon them!
My captain Scipione is of ours
Till death; he joins me in my liberty.
The bankers guard three hundred thousand ducats
At Genoa and at Florence: from such nurture
Springs a live army. Volpe and Michelotto
Refuse for any bribe to quit my service.
I do not even accuse my fate, still less
The ingratitude of men, for I have found
In all, save one I trusted, loyalty.
Bring me my poignard with the little mirror—
That peasant's hand ruffled my chemisette. . . .
[*The poignard being brought, he looks in its glass at his
tear-stained face.*]
What ruin! Damage!
. . . And yet my enemies are frightened, Vera.
These giants of power still fear a fettered man,

Ill, shaking in a tertian, and with life
 Itself unwarranted from hour to hour.
 Stir up the hearth and spread the juniper's
 Cloud of ripe resin. . . .

Enter MESSER NICCOLO MACCHIAVELLI.

Messer Niccolo !

[He gives his hand.

Why are you come ? You scarcely fear me now.
 Welcome !

MACCHIAVELLI.

Your Excellence, to bid farewell.
 To-morrow I depart.

CESARE.

Why are you come ? . . .

Ah, I am cheap ! All use me as the poor
 Burn forest—*ecco!*

No diplomacy !

Why should you bid farewell to me you ruined,
 Delaying your safe-conduct to my troops ?
 You triumph ?

MACCHIAVELLI.

I am curious, Excellence !
 And I must watch you, if I will or not.

CESARE.

A prodigy, a monster !

MACCHIAVELLI.

[With vibrating voice.] No, but a Prince
 Unequalled.

CESARE.

[Springing up.] You behold ? Have you the eyes—
 Keen, cutting crystals that have shot out joy
 To see me totter ?

Messer Niccolo,

If we are comprehended, we are greater
 Than Fate or any chance. I am a prince.
 Set down my kingdom that shall ever be

While dreams are portents. Oh, set down
 The perfect scheming of the miracle !
 Each part of action in my brain was solved,
 And flowed on to its end. You recognised,
 When, in the greatness of effective truth,
 Last year I awed Romagna, and exacted
 Sharp vengeance on my injurers, my kingdom
 Was as the genesis of stars ? With fire
 Of primal force I founded it, secure
 Against all future shocks, save this assault
 Of sickness unto death at the steep moment
 When death struck down my father.

. . . Yet it crumbles

It grows a shadow round me. Macchiavelli,
 Restore it, by the word embody it ;
 Let it not perish ! I shall ever wonder
 That such perfection fell to nothingness
 In its astute, swift likelihood. O Fortune !
 The gulf. . . . [*Breaking off with a gesture of menace.*
 You start for Florence ?

MACCHIAVELLI.

Ay, for Florence,
 To-morrow morning, close upon the dawn.

CESARE.

Take back to Florence this : if I but capture
 Occasion once again, I sign a treaty,
 Even if I needs must sign it with the Devil,
 Gather my treasure, play my last resources,
 Assemble all my friends, and, once at Pisa,
 Use every power of my extremity
 To render Florence evil, hour for hour
 Of her despite. . . .

[*With a low laugh.*] You think me slipping down
 Into my tomb. . . . Ah, Messer Niccolo,
 If I were you, this Cesar who is nothing
 Would be contemptible. You ought to crush me,
 You ought to make your mirth that I am flat :
 It is my law that you fulfil ; and justice
 Is linked so with my judgment, even my passion
 Conceives cold rage alone, or utter scorn
 Of those who cannot end me. I look often
 With still eyes on my end.

Farewell, farewell! You listen,
And all your face is speaking to my words.
We love each other, my best enemy.
Farewell.

All I have been is with you. Fortune
Out of her giddy air will arbitrate
Between my past and future.

[*He gives his hand again.* MACCHIAVELLI *quickly*
stoops and kisses it.

MACCHIAVELLI.

Prince!

ACT VI

SCENE I

Three years later.

A small Tower-prison of the Castle of La Mota del Medina in Spain.

Against one wall, hung with a canvas, four or five gyr-falcons sit leashed on a perch.

DON CESARE BORGIA *leans out of the narrow window, watching the pitch of his gyr-falcon. The GOVERNOR DON PEDRO DE TAPIA and a squire, JUANITO GRASICA, stand behind him.*

CESARE.

She rows the air, she towers . . . now makes her point,
Now waits—she waits up the free air.

Magnificent ! . . . A kite that she would vanquish. . . .

Quarry—and she upon her tower . . . free to drink blood.

[He looks back and laughs.

Ha ! Like a loosened thunderbolt she stoops !

. . . Could you but see ! Amazing !

Who-whoop ! She flies too hard . . . who-whoop !—and
cannot hold :

'Tis death, but so impetuous in the dealing

Her quarry is struck down. *[Turning again.*

Señor Don Pedro,

My vehement gyr-falcon loses me

Her quarry in your ditch. . . .

DON PEDRO.

It shall be sought.

CESARE.

No, leave it—that were tame !

[With a profound sigh he holds out the lure to which at last the falcon comes ; then he gives the bird to JUANITO, who ties her on the screen-perch.]

Is the sun setting ?—Vespers from the Church
Of San Lorenzo !

[To DON PEDRO.] We are gratified
By this long visit, for the course of things
Is brought by you in current to our eyrie,
Clear up from life upon your voice.

We may not

Detain you longer.

DON PEDRO.

But I exult, Don Cesar
De Borjà, in the converse of a man
Who held the crown of Mars in Italy.
There is lifting of the heart and joy of blood
When you recount. . . .

CESARE.

Don Pedro,
My chaplain will confess me presently ;
The soul must reach that vein.

DON PEDRO.

Forgive ! No further moment !
Adieu. *[Exit.]*

CESARE.

[With a snarling yawn, like a caged animal's.]
Begone !—He wearied me a year.
When will his servant, black Magona, bring us
The coil of rope ?

JUANITO.

At sunset, Excellence.

CESARE.

Now the king-star
Is falling down below the rocks—and blue
As a sea-deep is the hollow we must tempt ;
It is blue : one venturing bird

Makes it gigantic with a little shake,
 An arietta. . . . We must drop down lower
 Than the bird's song—it is not from the ground.
 Look, my Juanito !
 Aside I hitch my shoulders through this narrow
 And windy crevice of the barbican.
 I am as agile and as thin as you,
 I feel as young—
 Case-hardened from that pestilence, a tower
 Among my race ; strong as La Mota ;
 A creature that but needs to touch the earth
 To be Antaeus and invincible.
 You shall descend first—death for you or freedom.
 Then welcome death or freedom ! Could I, Juan,
 Leave you behind—
 We who sailed out together, desolate,
 And for three years have tasted unenjoyed
 Sleep, and the vigil that has been our lives ?
 We do not on a peradventure part :
 You have the lighter bones, the cord will bear you
 Down to the grass so featly, it will signal
 Its eagerness to me. . . . Juanito,
 How full a man you come from these three years !
 Will everything be changed as you ?

JUANITO.

Oh, no !
 Those who have loved you cannot love you more ;
 They cannot grow in that. Her Excellence
 Your sister will be happy
 Beyond the last hope of her weariness
 At the free news.

CESARE.

Lucrezia ! I can watch her—
 How at Ferrara all her life goes by ;
 How, from her sun-red towers, across the plain
 She is looking out, and cannot see the prison
 That stifles me : her eyes as they look out
 Turn Amor into stone.

When will the rope be brought ?
 How soon ? This Garcia de Magona will not
 Betray me as Gonsalvo at the last ?

JUANITO.

Garcia is safe; he burns to furnish you.

CESARE.

How wider

The steepness stretches, the tranquillity !
 What does it promise ? It is Fortune's Pit,
 That gapes in Spain, that swallowed me awhile
 In Rome and Naples, and then cast me out
 Alive upon this pinnacle. And now. . . .
 The world will be my chess-board, I survey
 Until occasion hail me. There is Louis
 Of France would set his horse to tread with mine :
 The Emperor hates as Pope the Rovere ;
 Gonzaga lord of Mantua will espouse
 My fellowship, Ferrara is fraternal ;
 My brother of Navarre, to whom I fly,
 Strangely accordant. . . .

[He gazes out in concentrated reverie. A key is turned softly at the door; GARCIA DE MAGONA enters, bringing ropes.]

JUANITO.

[In a whisper to himself.] But my lord is rapt !
 How still the Spanish boy,
 His black hair shining and his ears with edges
 Of the clear ruddiness of pomegranates,
 The light of sunset is so shed on him.

[He waits till GARCIA has locked the door on the inside, then steals towards him.]

GARCIA.

Be swift !

Hush, lay them in the chest beneath your clothes.
 They are good—they will be faithful to the Duke. . . .
 Christ grant his other means be safe as these !
 Will he not turn ?

Though of a different race,
 This lord, who is so reverend and so dreadful,
 Is homely and most courteous to the poor.
 I would not have you trouble him.

JUANITO.

Garcia, I dare not
Utter your coming since he misses it.
With widely-open nostrils and great eyes,
He hangs above the gulf.

GARCIA.

Tell him, Juanito,
One night when he is out of Spain in safety,
I went to San Lorenzo, for his sake,
To pray the Saints would bear him in their hands.
Cover the rope !

A trumpet will be blown
Down in the fosse, when Don Rodrigo's men
Are ready with the horses. All my life
Is in to-night if he is saved. Farewell ! [Exit.
[JUANITO hides the rope and sits on the chest in the last
red of the sunset, singing to himself.

“ Gentil Signore,
Cesare Borgia, figlio del Pastore.”

CESARE.

[*As if waking.*] Why, that is what they sing at my Cesena,
'Mid the snow-marbled Apennine. My shepherds
Hailed me the Shepherd's son—their simpleness
Could so attune the distant Vatican
With their cool valleys . . . and I cannot laugh.

JUANITO.

I have the rope : soon you will hear a call
Hummed up upon a trumpet.

CESARE.

O royal Italy !
O my Romagna . . . but I cannot breathe !
The sun is fallen, the air of the abyss
Blows like blue fields of waving flax. Look down !
The little stream Zapadiel disappears,
And the wild brushwood and the flock of goats ;
Even the East has faded. . . .

Did you tell me

They play up from the fosse a trumpet-note
 When the horses wait? Once more to touch a bridle,
 Once more astride to feel the rocking flanks!
 Ha, ha! And then my sudden apparition,
 As if I were the devil. Hark, a sound!
 Listen! [*He trembles all over.*
 A snake-note darting up . . . a bugle!

JUANITO.

No, no, no!
 The bleating of a goat.

CESARE.

How closely darkening
 The shadows favour us . . . and there are rumours
 The wind takes from the ground of horses' hoofs. . . .
 [*A trumpet is lightly blown.*
 Fortune, my war-cry once again!

[*JUANITO rushes for the rope.*] *Aut Cesar,*
Aut nihil! But to-day I take the plunge,
 I dare the pit, the downfall.

[*To JUANITO.*] Knot it here more firmly,
 Round this crenelle—steady! It must not jag. . . .
 Now my light ball, I throw you to the breezes,
 Ding-dangle—thus!

[*He lets JUANITO down.*] Your odds, Juanito,
 Against the wheel of Fortune!

. . . He keeps hold—
 O boy! the rope is taut. It holds. . . .

This cumpers me. [*Throwing off his cloak.*
 Our Lord God, in His infinite clemency,
 And for His greater glory against Fate's
 Vicissitudes. . . .

A jerk!—the final die is cast!
 Cesar—or nothing!

[*He climbs down the rope into the ravine, as voices are
 heard on the stairs. The door opens and DON
 PEDRO rushes in with soldiers.*

DON PEDRO.

What horn-call was that?
 Gone, gone! Our peril,

Our loss ! I reel . . . He shall not so escape.
 Death, or our re-possession of him !

Down,

Traitor, blasphemer, down ! Down !
[He cuts the rope, motioning some of the soldiers to descend.

[After awhile,
 Guards, are you there ?

A VOICE.

[Just heard from below.

They dragged him to their horses—all are fled.

SCENE II

*The Camp of the KING OF NAVARRE at Viana. A March
 tempest is blowing.*

*Enter MESSER AGAPITO meeting JUANITO GRASICA in front of
 a tent that beats in the wind. Their torches are almost
 extinguished.*

AGAPITO.

Juanito, have they drawn in the posts ?

JUANITO.

All are retired to shelter, Secretary.
 These Navarrais received my lord's command
 With manifest bewilderment.

AGAPITO.

Our Captain

Has ever saved his troops fatigue and tempest :
 These men are rude in habit, and the lashing
 Of mountain-storms familiar. O my lad,
 We are not now in Italy.

JUANITO.

Ah, would we were !

Señor Agapito, we have one breath :
 Our lives are for his use. What are your tidings ?

AGAPITO.

His every hope miscarries—everywhere
Hostility, abandon or suspicion :
The Pope has drawn his treasure from the banks,
Dried up the fountain of his polity,
The means of gathering troops, the hope of calling
His ancient captains to his side.

JUANITO.

O Señor,

That letter from the King of France, withdrawing
All revenues and honour from our lord,
Joining his Dukedom and his French domains
To Dauphiné and Berry, as they were
Before the royal gift—did you consider . . .
Yes, but I see you did . . . his look that day ?
It was a face of hell ; and ever since
His eyes throw flame out.

AGAPITO.

Think ! He has engrossed

The world's resources from his earliest years,
Marshal, as San Michele, of God's hosts,
And born Vicegerent. . . . Think ! He now has nothing
But his invincible, rejected sword.
A pauper, and a hireling to his brother—
This Navarrais, this kinglet—yet with sweep,
A great glance on a little verge, he conquers
These rebels of Viana and their chief
Louis de Beaumont, that the petty realm
Being consolidate and set between
His foes of France and Spain, he may have option
To hold o'er each the sword of Damocles.
The brain that wrought at Sinigaglia once
Works still among barbarians. But his lips,
Like famished wolf-fangs, and his thwarted youth,
His darkened joy in freedom !—I have wept . . .
Go in, go in !

JUANITO.

Such clouds of wind discharge,
I do not feel the rain.

[KING DON JUAN OF NAVARRE *and* DUKE CESARE DE VALENTINOIS DELLA ROMAGNA *advance towards the tent with torch-bearers.*

DON JUAN.

Our confidence
Is strict in your direction—not a word
From us to the great Captain, to the Son
Of War : our trust is blind.

You show distress
At this rude blowing, and your velvet cloak
Might well have been afloat upon a river.
Good night ; good sleep, my brother César. Scarcely
In Italy the air rolls thus.

CESARE.

Good-night,
Don Juan. Such a fan exasperates,
Entering all senses.

[*They shake hands.* DON JUAN *goes out.* CESARE
motions his torch-bearer to withdraw.

Come, Juanito ;
Unarm me. To your tent, Agapito ;
You will have rheum to-morrow. [Exit AGAPITO.

God !—the stroke
Of wing this tempest has : there is no shield.
Lift up the tent-skirt, Juan.

[*They go in, and the sound is heard of armour flung on
the floor. Then CESARE'S voice is heard.*

[*Within.*] Take a cloak,
A dry one from the press, and bear this message
Back to Don Juan ; I forgot.

Look round !

See that my stallion
Is dry, and, fresh-caparisoned, waits ready
In the next tent.

[JUANITO *comes from the tent and passes into the night.*

The tramp, the cavalcade
Of these cursed whirlwinds, of the secret legions—
The hauntings of an army I shall never
Command—

[*His voice rises.*] shall never summon. I am void ;
I cannot buy the forces that I love ;

I cannot as a Suzerain compel . . .
 I have no place, no rank, no furniture.
 This march, this freight of cannon—all were mine ;
 I struck them on the air, cried *Halt* or *On* . . .
 My patrimony ! Deep where dreams outspread,
 A phantom army, Cesar's army, rambles
 Ungeneralled.

O fury of the night !

This France that has rejected me, this Spain
 That bound me hand and foot, this Papacy
 That locks me from Romagna with its keys,
 From all my captains and my army calling
 Across the Alps—I have one lust, one cry
 For blood within me. . . .

Ha, to plunge my sword

In vengeance to the heart of France, the throat
 Of Spain, the entrails of the Vatican !
 To murder countries—not the flesh and blood
 Of just a man here, there, but states and kingdoms—
 Draw out their life ! Has not all checking life
 Flowed forth in darkness to my sovereignty ?
 If I have lost the land that I could rule,
 And if my army is a host of winds,
 I still can thirst for blood. . . . I have my sword,
 And, sword in hand, the last breath that I breathe
 Will be a breath of appetite and hate.
 I have my sword—

[He sweeps back the tent-skirts, and stands face to the storm, the torch behind him.]

O shifting elements,

Chaos is on me—I am not of Chaos !
 I could ride forth
 A single horseman riding forth to conquer
 The day, the night ; I could confine these winds
 Had I the watchword. . . . Beaten back, destroyed !
 —Close in !

[He wraps the folds of the tent together. There is no sound in the tent.]

A SENTRY'S VOICE.

Who passes ? *Pampeluna !* Do you hear ?
 I give you *Pampeluna !* . . .

[In a whisper.] No, *Saint Jaques !*
 Then it must be the wind.

BORGIA

A SUDDEN GREAT CRY.

Beaumont, a Beaumont !

ALARUM FROM ANOTHER POST.

The enemy ! Ho, ho ! The enemy !
Awake, wake !

ANOTHER CRY CLOSE AT HAND.

Beaumont !

CESARE'S VOICE.

[*Within.*] Duca ! Blood of God !
What is their war-cry ? Beaumont ?
[*He throws open the doors of the tent, struggling into his armour.* JUANITO rushes up.
Ambushed by Fate ! Juanito, the torch
Is falling : light another. Do you see,
I cannot find the buckles. . . . I must ride. . . .
Fetch out my horse. . . . The corselet—that will serve.
[JUANITO goes for the horse.]

CRIES RENEWED.

Beaumont, a Beaumont !

CESARE.

[*Snatching up his sword.*] Curse the renegades !
 What is my war-cry ? [*He comes out of the tent bareheaded.*]
 It confuses me. . . .
 The tramp, the tramp ! Ah, if I led an army !
 Ah, I could lead—on, on !

[The horse is brought.

JUANITO.

[*With one look at his master, as he mounts.*
Unarmed !
[*He runs into the tent.*

CESARE.

[*Laughing.*] Unarmed! . . . The sweep, the rush, the
hungry onset
Sweep me along, cry round . . . the engines crash!
Banners of Hell, my banners on the wind!

JUANITO.

[*Running out of the tent.*] Stay—your *celada*!

CESARE.

Fling it! *Duca*! On!
[*He dashes out of the courtyard. His escort has gathered
and waits stupidly the word of command.*]

JUANITO.

He gave us no command. His horse has stumbled.
Curses across the wind—

CESARE'S VOICE.

[*Suddenly distinct, though far away.*] On, *Duca*, on!

JUANITO.

He flies down the Solana in the wind.
Mount, mount! God's Love! But we must follow him.

SCENE III

*The ABBESS' room at the Convent of Corpus Domini at Ferrara.
At the back there is a little shrine and a crucifix.*

*The LORD CARDINAL IPPOLITO D'ESTE converses with MESSER
CRISTOFERO.*

CRISTOFERO.

It will not be her death; she has such safety
As quiet pinions give to birds in storm.

IPPOLITO.

I dared not tell her till her husband wrote :
His letter trembles in my hand. . . .

CRISTOFERO.

For days
She has been pacing, fasting, full of terrors
Worse far than any term ! The air has quickened
To prophet's divination—noise and silence
Was in it of great woe.

She comes. . . . God's mercy !

*Enter DUCHESS LUCREZIA BORGIA D'ESTE, in the dress
of a penitent, her hair unbound.*

LUCREZIA.

He is dead, Ippolito !

IPPOLITO.

Read—from your husband.

LUCREZIA.

Tell me . . . the parchment rocks. . . . You see
My hands, my eyes are helpless ; but my soul
Is firmer. Tell me. . . .

CRISTOFERO.

He is dead, Madonna !

LUCREZIA.

God told me—and I only hear it now !
Cesare !—and so far, so far. . . .

Oh, tell me,
Save me in nothing : I shall lose all refuge
Of credence if you do not make me sure
As death that he is dead.

IPPOLITO.

The letter——

LUCREZIA.

Some voice to tell me !

IPPOLITO.

[*To CRISTOFERO.*] Call Juanito. [*Exit CRISTOFERO.*
Sister, if you would learn, the King Don Juan
Has sent the faithful squire whose feet have followed
Your soldier to his grave.

LUCREZIA.

Whose feet have followed,
Among the foreigners. . . .

IPPOLITO.

O Light of Arms !
His wife, his sister will lament for him,
As round the dead Achilles wept Cassandra,
And wept Polyxena,
That in the world none lived redoubtable
As he who everywhere brought peace or war.
He drew his doom as lightnings ever strike
The mountain-heights Acroceraunian,
While lesser mountains stretch along, unflamed.
We leave him to God's judgment, in the glory
And terror of those strokes.

Re-enter CRISTOFERO with JUANITO GRASICA.

LUCREZIA.

By your own eyes,
By your own lips, vow you will tell me truth.
[*JUANITO lays his forehead on her hand.*
Where ?

JUANITO.

At Viana in Navarre.

LUCREZIA.

Viana ! . . .
It is as distant as the grave.

JUANITO.

He challenged
The outposts of the Count of Lérin. . . .

LUCREZIA.

That
Is nothing now—foregone ! Speak but of him ;
The moment, my extremity.

JUANITO.

We lost him ;
His horse affrighted galloped on the blast ;
He disappeared beneath us where the lea
Broke to ravine : we heard the hoofs beneath us,
And cries of fierce pursuit . . . but all was darkness.
[He weeps bitterly.]

LUCREZIA.

Yes, weep, weep—it is well !
Now speak of him.

JUANITO.

Dawn found me tangled by the night, and crying
In the alien, stone wilderness, a captive.
They brought his arms,
His sparkling arms ; they questioned of the Prince
Who wore them.

LUCREZIA.

But the moment . . .

JUANITO.

Of a sudden
The foe retreated, leaving me : I reached
The rough-hewn gorge. . . .
[Near to her and in a changed voice.]
He lay there, naked

He lay . . .

[LUCREZIA folds her arms over her breast as with a close embrace.]

—his face under the sky : his wounds
A hero's—twenty-three ; across his loins

A bloodied stone, his life-blood round the rocks,
 His hair a weft of red. How beautiful,
 And wild and out of memory was his face!
 The great wind swept him and the sun rose up . . .

LUCREZIA.

They buried him ?

JUANITO.

Beside the lectern of St. Mary's church
 Within Viana, and the pomp was great,
 For he had thought to bind a crown on once :
 They gave him kingly honours.

LUCREZIA.

Oh, pray for him,
 That he may rest in peace ! There must be peace.
 Great, agitated Spirit ! Oh, let prayers,
 Reverend Ippolito, let prayers be said
 In every church, at every altar-stone,
 By all the quiet lips that wait on God.
 Leave me. . . . The prayers, the prayers, dear Cardinal,
 That he may rest in everlasting peace !
 Cristoforo and the poor Squire—all go.
 All pray for us.
*[They leave her and she kneels before the crucifix of the
 little shrine.]*

Cesare, O my eagle ! . . .

The stony tract ! . . .

I am but for thy use
 To pray thee into peace, to win a crown
 Even now for thee, where the vast Majesty
 Gives each his destined aim made bright by prayers.
Maria, aid ! It is his heritage.
 Spare him and aid me ! Every day, at night,
 On through the years while I must see the sun
 Who have lost my sun fallen in that dire west—
 On to the silence of the hour of death,
 Let me not cease my voice ! It is my love
 Sole to him, as I am. O Cesare,
 My body evermore, till sepulture,
 Shall bind the hair-shirt to its flesh as barbs,
 Never forgetful how thou wert cast forth

Stripped to the sky, with nothing in the world
To plead to God with but thy valiant blood,
Thy regal front below Him.

I could almost
Swoon into prayer, but for the intercession
Of the great, peaceful companies on earth,
And bowing through the heavens and round God's Throne.

[*She sinks into a still ecstasy. Silently SUOR LUCIA enters and kneels beside her.*]

SCENE IV

The Château of La Motte-Feuilly in France.

A balcony hung with black—below it are forest-trees, some in full leaf, others creeping into green. Solemn masses of wild hyacinths clump up against the castle walls.

The DUCHESS CHARLOTTE DE VALENTINOIS in deep black stands in the balcony, a purple purse laid beside her.

CHARLOTTE.

My sables

Hang heavy on the spring ; and I myself
Have known a bliss struck cold, a pleasure
So terrible . . . he, who attracts such joy
And overcomes such hate,
Is puissant as an infinite lost god. . . .
The leaves
Are very soft and green and masterful. . . .
The peasant-folk approach, the humble poor
They say he gave his voice in softness to
Who brought old kings to murmur round his urn,
Rebellious that it held him.

[*Some PEASANTS come through the trees.*]

O good people,

Pray for Lord César—for his soul !

[*She gives alms from the purple purse and they pass out.*]

They pray,

They will go home and pray :
I love to watch them homeward, simple folk,
With hunger I can feed.

[*She leans forward, supporting her arms on the balcony.*

I cannot pray : my *Aves*

And all the beads of all my rosary,
Would be for access to him, for his favour.

They will pray,

And bring him peace far from me. But to me

It is the many leaves bring peace, the forest,

The wrapping and the murmur of the wind ;

For when I wake at night, wake in my forest,

I am glad to wake : I hear the accusation

Of the great Kings they carved about his tomb,

Who pass around it, weeping—Saul and David

And Solomon, the Scripture Kings, all lost

And wandering as ghosts and desolate,

With cry to the four royal winds, to Heaven,

And to the swerving roll of the great forest,

That César has no crown. . . .

[*A NURSE passes under the balcony leading a young child.*

. . . No crown, no race—I have not borne a son.

[*She bows her face over her arms.*

There is not any
Among the Kings gold-browed as this. Oh,
peace !
But lift it in your hands—'tis Gideon's fleece
This forthright weft of silky blond. And many
Dumb animals lurk at the eyelids' crease,
Under the eyes—a serpent that from fenny
Marish finds sluice ; a lion when in den he
Deviseth rage ; an ox beneath the trees :
Yea, and an eagle droopeth for its prey,
A malign eagle, in the slack, dull gaze.
But on the lips what panting savagery,
The fang of the wolf on winter forest-ways !
Yet is the face soft, lonely, over all
A honied mystery that must appal.

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